

Discourses on Kashmir

Authored and Edited
Prof. Manzoor Fazili



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Residency Road Srinagar 190001-Kashmir

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www.gulshanbooks.net

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Contents

Preface

1.The Origin And Evolution Of Kanger	2
2.The Salt Tea Or Nuna-chae	11
3.An Elitist Marriage Function In Srinagar	21
4.Peerization Of Social Life	27
5.The Credentials Of Pandits	37
6.Search Of A Daughter-in-law	50
7.Politics In Folklore	54
8.Kashmiri—A Household Language	64
9.Treaty Of Amritsar - A Sale Deed	70
10.Sheikh Abdullah—The Last Phase	74
11.Bureaucracy Through Ages	86
12.Educational Bureaucracy	94
13.Changing Values In Politics	101
14.Kashmir Bureaucracy And Democracy	108
15.Geography Behind Religious Personality	112
16.Routes Through Ages	133
17.Racial Admixture Of The People Of Kashmir	139
18.Aharbal Fall: A Fall Of Life	145
19. The Death Of Bandipore Apple Orchard	150
20.Kashmir With Or Without Snow	155
21.Bathroom Culture In Kashmir	161
Index.....	168

In memory of my two brothers:

Late Muzzafer Fazili and
Late Mansoor Fazili,

One fell prey to Indo-Pak Schism and the second to his over sensitivity.

PREFACE

The essays included in this collection are the research papers, essays and articles published by me from time to time in various journals and newspapers. These papers pertain to ethnic, social, political and geographical contours of Kashmir in the present and historical perspectives.

Most of the articles were published in the "Kashmir Times Jammu" during the period 1989-2002. Nonetheless the article "Geography behind religious personality of Kashmir" was included in Geography of J&K" published by the department of Geography and regional development, the university of Kashmir. The paper on "Sheikh Mohd Abdullah—the last phase", was included in the Shiraza (English) published by J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages Srinagar. Thanks to all Editorial Boards of these papers and Journals, who invited and encouraged me to write.

The assistance, encouragement, support and service granted to me by my family members, particularly my wife, fills me with gratitude.

Mr. Qalamuddin and his wife, popularly known as Kaka and Kaki, whose long association as Fidus Achates in the family, deserve special mention for their service and love for my family, during last four decades of our mutual affiliation.

Thanks to Mr. Waleed, my Computer operator who took pains to type the entire manuscript and my grandson Ishan Fazili (Srinagar) who took pains to improve every sentence and correct the entire manuscript before it was dispatched to the Press.

Manzoor Fazili

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF KANGER

Necessity conditions man to all things and he is conditioned by things to his environment. Whether man lives in this part of the world or any other, he is conditioned by the necessity that he has as human being. Kashmiri can neither be an exception nor in any form mismatch—yet Kashmiri has a singularity of being born in the land which is usually compared to Switzerland, the Italian lakes, the English Lake District, to France, Greece, Australian Tyrol and most often of all to the Garden of Eden itself. M.A Stein affirms that the peculiarity of the geographical position of Kashmir explains itself their remarkable individuality characterizing the historical development of the people of Kashmir. The results of this isolation according to Stein struck him and he found deep traces it has left in the character and habits of the people of Kashmir. The Kangar as a device against the rigorous cold in the valley is a manifestation of this development and necessity in the history of Kashmir culture.

The name of Kangar, better known as Kangir, is according to De Hultzseh in all probability derived from the Sanskrit word, *Kasthangarika*. Stein, after Kalhana, also agrees that it is derived from the same word. The word is believed to have evolved out of the two words “Kani” a switch and “Gar” the maker. According to G.T Vigne, “The Kangar is a basket with a handle, containing a red vessel or earthen ware about the size of 42 lb shot into which is put a small quantity of lighted charcoal”. The origin of the bazier is disputed by some but its indigenous character is a matter of fact. Dr. W.F. Elmslie, a well known missionary observed that the Kashmiris probably learnt its use from the Italians who accompanied the retinue of the Mughal emperors. During the winters in Florence, no woman of the lower classes walks outside without carrying Scaldino, which according to GMD Sufi resembles the Kashmiri Kangar. According to some the Moghals having been defeated three times at the hands of Kashmiris, desired, in connivance with the Italians, to reduce the Kashmiri race to cowardice.

Some believe that Italian Priest may have introduced the Kashmiri custom into Italy on his return. A similar vessel is also used in Japan. The French according to GMD Sufi have one corresponding to it in their “*Chauffer chamic*” or pot of charcoal fire. Some contend that if the Italians really introduced the Kangar into Kashmir, they would have introduced their own name to it. Mankha’s *Crikanthacharita* further refutes this theory by maintaining the existence of the bazier, in Kashmir as early as twelfth century A.D as ‘Hasantika’ or bazier. The bazier was generally used in Kashmir those days. The word ‘Hasantika’ occurs also in Kalhana’s *Rajtarangni*. References in *Rajtarangni* prove that Kangar is indigenous to Kashmir. It is not surprising also because necessity is the mother of invention. Dr. GMD Sufi is of the opinion that such experience is not novel to Kashmiris. However our technique of crafting Kangar is novel, otherwise such baziers are available in Iran, Arabia, Spain and Italy. Delle-Valle’s word *tenor* or perhaps ‘Tannur’ in Arabia or in present times in Kashmir the word ‘Tannuri’ is an indication that such baziers are not uncommon to human civilization. However its technique of crafting is novel in Kashmir, possibly such unique piece of art is available to none of the civilization. *Rajtarangni* mentions its name and use distinctively and clearly at many places, sometimes extolling it and sometimes disreputing it. In a wider context Kalhana mentions Kangar in terms of general theory relating to life. He says:

“Man’s efforts are comparable to the ambers in the bazier. Sometimes it burns to annihilate anything even if it seems cold. Sometimes as it may be the irony of fate, it inflates ones mouth while puffing”.

Kalhana at other place mentions:

“Then once by chance the king woke up, in the middle of the night while the house was lit up by lamps and glowing fire panes shone forth”.

At other place in *Rajtarangni*, Kalhana in his not complimentary but life like description of it refers only to inform us the burn marks left by the Kangar, which has been in general use in Kashmir since early times. When a king was being deposed and that Brahmans were to discuss the nomination of the successor, Kalhana described the event in the following verse:

“Long lasted the discussion as to the disposal of the crown, while those (Brahmans) whose beards were scorched by smoke, wished to raise this man or that to the throne”.

From earlier times, therefore, the Kangar is in use in the valley. It is

bazier which contains live coal covered by a grill to warm the body and protect the Kashmiri against the severe winter. It is shipped under the voluminous pheron nowadays under light terriwool pheron or Kashmiri gown. In its matureness the Kangar has acquired a shape and form which constitutes four distinctive elements. It has earthenware, named Kundal, and has woven grills of kani branches got out of witch hazel (*Parrotia Jacquemontiana*) plants in the forests. The plant known in Kashmir is Pohh. Finally, the charcoal which is filled in the Kundal or earthen ware.

The earthen ware or kundal has long history of its own. It is used to be prepared by potters and the institution of pottery, presently extinguishing, was very much in vogue from early times in Kashmir. This earthenware is till date known in Kashmir by the word Kundal. The word Kundal in literature connotes something derogatory when relating to women. The institution of pottery during its growth was owned by the professional potters inhabiting villages assigned for the same occupation. Many of these villages situated in the massay tract to the south of the Wular Lake were enclosed by artificial embankments and corresponded in shape to the description of Kundal or ring. Two of these villages UtsaKundal and Mar-a-Kundal which are even today situated together near the left bank of the Vitasta or Jhelum. Even Stein has been able to locate them and found them at about 74° log and 34° lat. Kalhana also designates them as Kundals. In his description of the Wular Lake, a village Suyyakundal, situated on the outskirts of the Lake, is mentioned by Jonaraja as well. Some of these villages still exist in Tehsil Sonawari. The word, according to Stein, has Sanskrit origin and means 'ring' as used by Kalhana designating the round earthenware bowl placed in the Kangar or Kasthangarika. This historical significance of the Kundal, should, therefore, qualify social relevance of the earthenware from early times to the present. Kundal is the basic component in the preparation of the bazier. It is the container of the charcoal. It is even today prepared by indigenous potter.

The second component of the bazier is the grill that is woven around the Kundal. The grill is prepared out of the branches of witch hazel available in Kashmir forests. Amongst the other branches are included Kani of Posh, Len, Kech and so on. English translations for the trees of these branches include witch hazel, wicker etc. The scientific name for poh is *Parrotia Jacquemontiana*. However, the durable Kangar is that which is grilled by Poh or Posh and Len branches. The branches used in the bazier are very

tiny, cut and brought by the artisans who make necessary basket during the advent of autumn season. These branches are peeled and dried up and then woven round the Kundal.

The grilling or weaving of these branches round the Kundal need a special craftsmanship. Kashmir inherits till date the class of such craftsman. There is however, a special technique possessed by this class of professionals for the preparation of the bazier. Kundals are dependable to the supply of potters, which is in its own right a commercial class. Kan-yul is the purchaser of Kundal and craftsman to weave or grill it. From the base of the Kundal known as 'Chuk' the process of weaving starts. The Kundal is kept under a particular direction by the Craftsman and branches of 5 or 7 more, according to the size of earthenware, give a start to the weaving of the 'Chuk' or bottom. The weaving starts in the form of Dah-Bah or Chuddah Poher i.e. ten, twelve or fourteen branch tresses. After Chuk or bottom is woven, then Kundal is tightened, (i.e. Gandon). It follows with the tightening (Door Gandan). Kan-ta (i.e. plain ring) is woven which follows Doore or belt. Then 'Mo' or upper grill is made and Chunt or mouth is pieced together. At the back a 'Kor' or ring is woven and attached. Extra front top is interlocked which is called "Chunt Gand". The frontal portion is usually between 8 to 10 or more, in width depending on the size of the Kundal. It is the mouth and its side ventilations which are usually two to three inches wide. The back portion of the top basket has four to five horizontal grills each of them having four sticks in number. Above these horizontal grills it has semi-circular grills with a ring in its attachment. The frontal grill is thick consisting of 8 to 12 sticks of Poher, which is the main handle. On the top a semi-circular grill is attached. Thus, the Kangar, as it exists today, is found in every house and home in the valley, in its maturity.

The ring attached to it at the back, hangs a chain or Tsalan—the Tsalan sometimes is made of a metal or wood. It is made by a blacksmith or by a local carpenter respectively. This Tsalan consistently hangs on with the bazier—so as to help increasing or decreasing the warmth in the pot according to the need of the user. The rural people usually call the process of increasing the warmth as "Phur Karun", whereas the people in Srinagar call it "Wokhul Karun". At its best the Kangar, makes a Kashmiri warm when the world outside him is cold.

Once the Kangar is ready after it is woven by the Kan-yul and purchased by the user, the house wife puts either live or dead charcoal in it.

Some burning ashes are put on its top, if the charcoals are dead. The moment the bazier is slipped under the pheron, it warms up giving heat to the body. The best charcoal for use in firepot is the charcoal either secured from the jungles by the "Tsenae wael" or charcoal sellers, or collected by the housewife for her own domestic hearth. The fallen leaves of chinar trees are also used as charcoal in the bazier. It is the best of all charcoal, and most dangerous at the same time. The metaphorical use of Buni-nar or 'Atishi-Chinar' is proverbial.

A Kangar can be woven or grilled in singles or doubles, in accordance with the size of the Kundal. It is woven in various types depending on the decorative, antiquity and durability character of the bazier. These types accordingly include, "Run-dar Kangar", "Sarposh", "Zajeer" and "Zeenader" Kangar. One of the rude forms of Kangar is known as "Manun" mainly earthenware—such a type is mostly used by boatman. It is not grilled. It is a crude type of Kundal—made of clay but thick and manly. The Kangar has a feminine but ungrilled Manun has masculine character. Amongst famous baziers are included 'Runa Kangar', 'Banda Pur Kangar', Islamabad Kangar and Tsara-Kangar. In their content all of them are of the same stuff but in shape and style, they are all different. Tsari Kangar or the Kangar from Islamabad are decorative in their character, whereas a Kangar from Bandipore is more durable. The prices depend on their style and durability. However, in autumn, the sellers exploit the situation by demanding any price believing in the "make hay while sun shines". Foreigners and Visitors from outside the valley usually carry the bazier for them against any price—such Kangar is usually decorative and sold round the year.

In the process of historical evolution the Kangar, assumed a significance of cultural relevance. It acts as "Isband Soz" or a bazier to emanate scent to the assembly of invitees or "Salar" on all happy occasions, in particular on the marriage ceremony. Whether it is "Kath Gandan" "Nabad Nishin" i.e. engagement, or the first visit to the bride's home or main marriage ceremony or "Phira sal" or any other occasion connected with marriage, the Kangar plays the role of an 'Isband Soz'. Though a metallic 'Isband Soz' is replacing the Kangar, yet most of the country people and the lower classes in towns and cities enjoy Kangar as the odorous emanator. A Kangar is also presented as a gift to the bride or groom by respective would be in-laws. Such a Kangar, originally a decorative piece, is specially made presentable. In it are placed currency notes or gold in the earthenware ac-

cording to the economic status of the family. I remember, a case from Srinagar, when on the commencement of the first winter after engagement, a bride's father gifted out to the groom a Kangar with currency notes filled in the earthenware and unchisled gold on its surface designating one as the cost of charcoal and the other as the cost of embers. Such kangar is mostly decorated. It has a novel style and shape. It is usually Rundar or Zeendar Kangar. Rarely the bazier is used on occasions of death ceremony but for all practical purposes it is the friend of the patient, healthy and the cheerful.

In its historical development, the Kangar has assumed a political dimension. When courtiers, in ancient Kashmir, used to deliberate over the succession issues of the kings, Kangar was hurled on opponents. Since democratization of institutions in the state, Kangar was universally exchanged in between the workers of opposing political parties and during the period of internal strife and dissensions of a political party. On the very first day of Hartal following the theft of sacred relic from Hazratbal shrine, when a leader tried to speak from the top of a car at Amirakadal Chowk, Kangaris had a collective assault on the leader. Most of the head quarters of political parties have witnessed over the past many decades a free exchange of burning Kangris. In conflicts between individuals or groups, the bazier is freely and universally used to harm the opponents. It has been used as an instrument of harming the opponent anywhere and at every place whether public or private. The usual phrase used for hurling the Kangaris "let me hurl it on to you to burn your skin off".

The institution of Kangar has an economic relevance—it has evolved two economic classes. One as said earlier, is the Kan-Yul, and the second 'Kral' or potter. The Kral is the supplier of the 'Kundal' whereas 'Kanyul' is both maker of the bazier and the supplier of Kanis or branches of wicker. In one of the class, there are negligible intermediaries but 'Kanyul', who prepares the pot, is highly exploited. There are intermediaries who purchase the bazier from the 'Kanyul' in bulk to distribute to markets on their own profit. The intermediaries are itself a class who can go to the highest possible exploitation. These "Kanyuls" or makers are not well organized—they are scattered all over the valley. Each area has its own group of Kangar makers. Though these classes have improved in economic standards, yet they are by and large a neglected class of society. Assuredly, the two classes with great a contribution toward the comfort of the poor and the rich

remain socially an out caste.

Literature refers to artistic writings which are worthy of being remembered. In the broadest sense literature includes any type of writings on any subject—Kashmiri literature also does not ignore Kangri as a symbolic of its culture. Some praise its utility, some its beauty and form, but most of the literature extol it as something unique. Dr. Mohd Zaman Azurdah says, "I cannot help extolling the high sense of beauty of its maker—Kangri to me is like a handsome and fair complexioned bride. Its sound, beautiful silvery arms are simply ravishing——Its nose reminds one of Qazzakh's arrow to which Kashmiris invariably liken the beloveds nose." In Kashmiri literature, Kangri is metaphorically considered ones beloved. Moti Lal Saqi writes in praise of Kangri, "Kashmir and Kangar are each others identification. Present the bazier anywhere and at any time you identify Kashmir". Thus according to the writers the Kangar and Kashmir are compatible. There is enough folklore available to extol the heating apparatus. For example:

OHI Kangri, I yearn for you,

OHI Kangri, I brought you from Charisharief

OHI Fine Kangri born of Islamabad

OHI Kangri, I love and yearn for you.

Kangar over the years has achieved international recognition. It is found in most of the drawing rooms of European countries, in some countries of Asia, in Americas and Russia. Its presence in the drawing rooms in foreign countries caused by the fact of its decorative character is contributed to it by the high sense of aesthetics of its maker. It is presented to the foreigner by the Kashmiri, or carried to other lands by a Kashmiri or is propagated and carried by the foreign travelers who visit the garden of Eden from time to time. Kangar has assumed a personality through its history which is both preservative as well as destructive. Throughout its existence it has protected a Kashmiri against the rigorous winters and cold of the valley, yet Kalhana finds burn marks on the body of courtiers during the deposing of Survaram II. Most of the European travelers as well as non-travelers or officials, who visited Kashmir from Bernier in 1665 down to Brigid Keenan in 1988, talked the damage caused by the bazier. Moorcroft and Trebeck say, "As a further protection against the cold in winter the Kashmirians usually carry under their tunid an earthen pot a small quantity of live

charcoal, a practice that invariably discolours and scars the skin, and not unfrequently occasions palse". Lawrence the settlement commissioner, in second half of nineteenth century said, "Small children use Kangar-day and night and few of the people have escaped without burn-marks caused by carelessness at night. It is said that the Kangar is often a cause of cancer."

Persian scholars and historians from Mullah Ahmad and Malik Haider Chadura down to historian Hassan Khuihami, Pt Anand Koul Bamzai, Mohammad-ud-din Fauq and GMD Sufi, have often warned against the dangers of the Kangar. Hassan writes,

"Due to the heat of the bazier, the people in Kashmir, often burn their tunics and black burn-marks are found on their thighs".

Dr GMD Sufi remarks that many houses are destroyed by fire every year in Srinagar and in villages due to the careless use of Kangar. Scores of patients are treated at hospitals for epithelioma, a kind of cancer generated from Kangar burns, even though it may be said, in a way the use of Kangar aids digestion as an external heater for the stomach.

Presently, our doctors also warn us against this type of cancer. The fact and experience, however, shows that burn-marks or even cancer is more caused to those people who are ill clad. Hardly any evidence is available to prove that there are found burn marks with those people who enjoy proper clothing. Even today, such people from amongst the lowest economic classes, who cannot properly be clothed, are subjected to such burn-marks. Kangar on this score and on other reasons is under many assaults. According to Dr. Zaman Azurdah Kangari is under assault from dressing gown, chair and sofa, electric and electronics and rubber bottle cultures—it accordingly endangers its existence. However, I believe that as long as the have nots culture is allowed to continue, the bazier shall continue to exist. The death of this class shall reduce the Kangar to take the position in a museum.

Kangar is symbolic of creativity in a Kashmiri. Had the scientist and its author been known to the people, most probably they would have erected an artistic shrine in his memory. He would have deserved it. The fact is that Kangar has not been a single man's contrivance—it has evolved from the concept of Kang—its origin in Kashmir may have been 'Manun' or the simply clay-pot and later weaving the grills were conceived and practiced.

All said and done regarding the bazier during its growth the fact is

that it is nearer to the common man in Kashmir for it has preserved him against all rigorous, winters and colds in Kashmir. It has done more good to our society than any harm. The rich could preserve himself in Hamams, the poor by slipping the bazier under the Pheron or under the bosom as historian Hassan puts it, "What Laila was to Majnun bosom, so is the Kangar to a Kashmiri".

THE SALT TEA OR NUNA-CHAE

A professional doctor, some time back, on Srinagar Doordarshan said that Satan had left two things to the people of Kashmir in tradition and one of them is the use of Salt tea. What were his experiences regarding the consumption of Salt-tea, were not divulged by him nor did he speak about his findings in a laboratory, if he had any. He had nothing to offer in support of his finding, however, in offering the theory he was subtle. Before, I provide my opinions about it; I would like to describe its history in brief.

Researchers, tell us that Tea, in the world civilization was initiated originally by Chinese. It was during the reign of the mythological emperor of Shen Nung about the year 2737 B.C, when tea was supposed to have been introduced in China. Encyclopedia of Britannica is of the opinion that the credible mention of it is in AD 350, when tea was described by Kuo P/o in the Erh Ya or ancient Chinese dictionary. In the beginning it was mostly used in Southeast Asia which includes bordering provinces of southeast China, northern India, Burma, Thailand and Indo China. Accordingly, the state of J&K is included in it.

It was, as consequence, largely grown and still is grown mostly in south-east Asia. However, cultivation and the uses of beverage spread throughout China and Japan under the patronage of Buddhist priests, who according to a belief, sought a means of combating intemperance. From China the cultivation of Tea spread to Japan, wherefrom it was introduced into Java in 1684. In Formosa it was cultivated in 19th century. India had indigenous tea and was found in Assam in 1847. In Ceylon Tea was cultivated in the late 1870's and Russians started growing it in 1847. Later, it was introduced in the Arab world and Europe. By 1952, the highest producing countries in Tea production were India, Cylon, Indonesia, Britain, East Africa, Pakistan, Formosa and Japan. The State of J&K does not grow tea; there is

no evidence in Rajtarangni that it had ever been produced in the state. During past two decades, however, the government had tried to grow such plants on trial basis in Jammu province and some areas in the valley but after initial official noise no reports about its propagation were available.

In the process of history of tea we find a legend attributed to the origin of it and is mentioned in Encyclopedia Britannica. It concerns to Budhidharma or Daruma, a Buddhist saint, who having fallen asleep over his devotions, cut off his eye lids and threw them on the ground, where they took root and grew up as a bush, the leaves of which, when dried and infused in water, produced a beverage that would banish sleep.

Possibly, with the propagation of Tea in China, the people of Kashmir must have been accustomed to it in ancient Kashmir but Rajtarangni provides no proof for it. Even travelers who visited Kashmir in medieval times did not mention its consumption except one or two who give a casual reference. However, it is known to the historians of the 19th century Kashmir that gentry in the state were fond of consuming Tea. According to Hassan Khuihami, it was not customary for the people to use tea. It is recorded by him that during the reign of Mirza Haider green tea was imported to Kashmir from Yarkand. It was consumed by the aristocracy, who were fond of it. In the reign of Afghans the black tea got currency in the state, when it was available in abundance for higher classes of the people. The affluent people in the state entertained their visitors with a cup of tea during the period though they had the notion that its consumption was injurious to health. In Kashmir, common people regularly used the bark of the yew, *Taxus baccata* (Posthil), when tea was luxury enjoyed only by few people. Noorshah of Patwan, a saint and seer, during historian Hassan Khuihami's time, blended the leaves of "Rangresh" a kind of herb but intoxicating and used it as a substitute for tea. He used to boil it, mixed salt and milk with it and made a superb and tasty tea. The historian believed that the tea used by the saint was highly beneficial to remove the weaknesses of the girdle pains and typhoid. Rangresh, herb was a common man's tea for sometime in Kashmir. Moreover, a tea known as "Majooli" was freely used in varieties, by some people. It was during this period (i.e. from Mirza Haider's reign to the end of Afghan rulers) that Kashmiris developed the tea known as "Nuna-Chae" or "Shir-Chae" or Salt Tea in its present sublimated form.

Since, long, therefore, Kashmiris use green tea leaves to prepare "Nuna Chae." It is even now a common man's tea. It is the workers tea and the tea

used by peasantry. It is used in the house of a "Grus" or a farmer and the rustic. It is the tea enjoyed by all common people except "Babus" in offices. Hindus and Musalmans alike take it. Pandits mostly call it "Shir-Chae" and Musalmans everywhere name it "Nuna-chae".

Generally, speaking, teas are divided in three classes. One of them and commonly used in almost all societies except Kashmir is the fermented or green tea. Another category is that of unfermented or green tea. The third category is that of semi-fermented or colong teas. Kashmiris generally, take unfermented or semi-fermented tea. Though all these kinds of teas are grown out of the same plant, yet in nature they differ. The difference is caused to them by the methods of their manufacture, local climate, soil and cultivating conditions. Thus one tea grown in one country may differ in taste and quality as compared to the tea grown in other country. The Chinese black tea is tastier than Indian black tea. Former is better beverage than the tea we use in Kashmir—"Nuna Chae is more of a diet than a beverage. W.R Lawrence said as early as 1880's that the tea for the people of Kashmir used to come from three sources: Bombay tea from China, hill tea from Kangra in the Punjab, and green tea through Lhasa and Ladakh. He further added, "The Kashmiris like their tea very sweet or very salt—the former is known as Kahwa and the later as Shir and is always mixed with milk both made in Russian Samawar, which is popular institution in Kashmir". The people of Kashmir are so much interested in this institution that those of the Kashmiris who have migrated to the plains of India or Pakistan hundreds of years back still use, "Nuna Chae" or "Shir-Chae or Salt Tea. In Pakistan plains, the people having Kashmir origin use salt tea though they mix sugar also with it. It is believed that Alama Iqbal, great poet, Philosopher also enjoyed salt tea during his life time.

According to Chinese records, tea had its first handbook in the Ch'a ching, written by the Chinese Scholar, Lu YU, about AD 780. However, tea and tea drinking have been celebrated in many ways in literature and the fine arts more than 12 Centuries. A notable contribution to tea by the Japanese was its glorification in the art and practice of Cha-no-Yu or tea ceremony, literally hot water tea. It is believed that the origin of the tea pot is the Chinese wine Jug. Dr. Nicholas Brafy, Chaplain to the court of William and Mary called tea, "the sovereign drink of pleasure and of health", in his poem "The Tea Table". William Cowper wrote of "the cups that cheer but not inelinate", borrowing the phrase according to Encyclopedia

Britannica, from Bishop Barekley. Paul Revere, the American Patriot, was famous too, for his anti cartoons and his artistic silver tea service. "Waltzing Matilda" is an Australian Brillycan tea song. Many beautiful paintings have had tea as their inspiration. They are to be found in the worlds leading art galleries museums alongwith fine examples of silver and China tea pots. Kashmiri, Literature, art and paintings also praise the tea used in Kashmir.

In folk songs we have enough examples to cite. While women folk sing and dance on a marriage day and wait their cup of salt tea, they sing in case their favourite cup of tea is delayed:

Is not Jani, tea on sale?

Is it sold at Amirakadal?

Is not Jani, tea on sale?

Green, Pahear, not on sale,

Not Shir, not Moghul, Tea on sale,

Is not Jani, tea on sale?

Samawar, a traditional heating apparatus for salt tea, is part of the tea institution in Kashmir and accordingly tea and Samawar go together when ladies sing:

Samawar has a golden net,

As if Chief host arrives in style

Golden Samawar with silver cups,

We have come to drink the tea.

Enough literature may be available in Kashmir and elsewhere in the world praising tea whether sweet or salt, yet there are people who tarnish its image both as beverage and nutrition. Particularly the people in urbanized areas criticize its use both on health and social utility. The cause of their hatred against the tea is continuous advertizing by various agencies or the media in favour of fermented teas and media itself is under the indirect control of national, transnational or other similar corporations. Urbanized people easily succumb to the media propaganda and rural people follow the suit. Further, the doctor either consciously for the purposes of financial gains or unconsciously becomes a tool in the hands of these national corporations. The people are made to understand that salt tea is in-

jurious to health on account of its chemical constituents. I do not suggest that it is absolutely harmless but what I suggest is that we cannot generalize—it is harmful to all, under all circumstances, conditions, climates and geographical entities. This would be fallacy if we generalize. Let us, therefore, examine its chemistry.

"Nuna-Chae" or "Shir Chae" or Salt Tea, which is consumed by Kashmiris alone wherever they reside, has four components—tea leaves, salt, soda, or sodium bicarbonate, and milk. Let me examine each component and its elements.

The principal chemical elements of green tea leaves are caffeine, tannin and essential oil. Caffeine supplies quality to tea, which because of its purity, is without harmful reaction. It is a vegetable base stimulant and is diuretic. It helps in increasing the volume of the urine excreted as by a medicinal substance. Tanin or Tanin acid is another element in the leaves. Because of its styptic and astringent properties, it has been used in the treatment of tonsillitis, pharyugitis, hemorrhoids and various skin eruptions. Tannin acid is administered internally to check diahorea and intestinal bleeding, and also as an antidote for metallic, alkaloidal and glycoidal poisons with which it forms insoluble precipitates. Accordingly, it helps in strengthening body in general. Finally, oils in it help adding the flavor and aroma, which are chief factors in determining the value of the cup in a trade sense.

The second component, salt has the earliest history, both in terms of use and trade. In Kashmir, salt is known from ancient times and Rajtarangni including later chronicles usually refer to trade in salt. Salt has, earlier, been a comparatively, expensive articles in Kashmir. Before partition salt was imported from Punjab (West) or Ladakh. Srivara tells us the price of this article during his time. However, during 1880's Stein records, that in Kashmir 7½ Kgs of salt were sold for a rupee. Salt, is at present comparatively the only cheap commodity available for the people of Kashmir. During uncertain years of 1947-49, Kashmiris had to face many odds on account of non-availability of salt. Salt during these years of state accession to India was much politicized. The fact is that the rock salt is better at the table than the sea salt. However, iodized salt has now replaced uniodized salt. The chemistry of salt tells us that the best known use of sodium chloride is as table salt. For this service of men at table, a fine-grained and now iodized salt of high purity is used. To ensure that it will remain free-flow-

ing when exposed to the atmosphere, small quantities of sodium carbonate or trisodium phosphate sufficient to combine with such bigrascopic impurities as calcium and magnesium chlorides are added. Salt is used universally as a condiment and preservative. Salt is within limitations a recognized health giving and protecting chemical of human organism.

"Salt and incense were economic and religious necessities of the ancient world and contribute greatly to the knowledge of the ancient highways of commerce". Salt in Kashmir also had religious and economic necessity. Even today, it is used on religious ceremonies as well on social occasions.

Soda or Sodium bicarbonate is that component of the "Nuna Chae", which is used in medical preparations. In medicine it is usually to act as an anti acid. As a loose title, soda includes carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium hydrate, caustic soda, and sesquicarbonate, or trona. However, soda used in Kashmir salt tea is sodium bicarbonate.

Lastly, Kashmiri learnt empirically, to use milk in the "Phaer Chae" (Green tea) long back. In modern human civilization the earliest mention of the use of milk in tea appeared in a book of travel by the Dutch author, Jean Nieuholf, who observed the practice in Canton China in 1655. We may not be in a position to locate the exact year of using salt tea in the present form, but we are in a right to conjecture that in due course of influences from China, we were sometime after Mirza Haider in an experimental stage to evolve a method of preparing salt tea in accordance with our tastes and geography. The milk of animals was used as food by man much earlier than the beginning of the recorded history. All peoples roaming the grass lands of Asia with their sheep and cattle thousands of years ago used it. Able, son of Adam was "keeper of sheep" and probably consumed milk. The earliest mention of milk in the Bible is Jacob's prediction in 1700 BC, that Juda's teeth shall be "white with milk", Canan was, "a land with flowing milk and honey", in 1500 BC. The holy Quran promises milk and honey to the virtuous. The Hindu Vedas written prior to 1400 BC mention the use of butter as food. But, all these instances, the mention of milk or its products is incidental and implies much earlier use. I would say that milk is used by Kashmiris since the time the valley was colonized by Kasyapa. Milk was used and shall be used by all human societies because it is a perfect diet for human life. Scientific investigations have shown that it contains the fat soluble Vitamin A and carotene, its precursors, but

the amount varies considerably with the food of the lactating animal. The fat soluble Vitamin D and the water soluble B complex and C are also present. It is believed that milk contributes to the daily requirements of a moderately active man above 90% of the calcium, 30% to 40% of Riboflavin, 25% to 30% of the protein, 1% to 20% of the calorize of Vitamin A and B and less than 10% of the iron and Vitamin D.

The discussion so far, oracles clearly how fat these four components and their combination was caused by the consciousness and conscience of the people of Kashmir. It is not the result of only necessity but also the collective wisdom of the people of Kashmir. Its combination clearly visualizes that the "Nuna-Chae" is a balanced and nutritious—beverage and diet suited to the temper and geography of the people of the valley. Caffine supplied by the tea leaves is without any harmful action—it is a vegetable base stimulant and diuretic. Tannin is an acid with though not harmful for health in a small dose, yet is neutralized by Soda bicarbonate which is anti-acid. Salt is essential for the body and at the same time is a stimulant. In our country there are people who place, a desirable quantity of salt on their tongues to avoid boredom. Milk, a perfect diet neutralizes all elements in "Nuna Chae" to make it nutritious. Tannin, is also, fixed by casein in the milk. According to Harber, addition of milk to tea robs it off practically all its astringency. Salt tea or "Nuna-Chae", thus chemically stands unique amongst the teas brewed in other parts of India and the world. It is chemically, a unique combination.

Generally, speaking, no tea is harmful except when used in excess. In 1935, Dr. C.R. Harber a chemist of the Indian tea Association said, "a cup of tea contains, on the average, a little under a grain of Caffeine and about two grains of Tannin. The medical dose suggested in the British Pharmaceutical codex is 1-5 grams, and of tannin 5-10 gram. "It will be realized, therefore, that in the average cup of tea these two most important constituents of tea are present in very small amounts, especially when it is remembered that the Caffeine is injected gradually and the Tannin is fixed by proteins during its journey through the alimentary tract. The infusion is faintly acidic but almost neutral. The gastric juice is a thousand times as acidic". Kashmir salt tea thus, is harmless, not only that teas are generally harmless but the combination of its components make it nutritious. It is this nature of the "Nuna Chae" that made Kashmir Persian lore to express and advise the people.

Chae Ra Na, Na Kuni

Agar Kuni Ta Dawaz Dah Na Kuni.

(First of all, do not refuse offer of a cup of tea and even if you do so, commit to it after twelfth cup)

This folklore in Persian language, current even today with persianised elders, reveal, that the salt tea according to Kashmir tradition is not harmful even upto the extent of consuming twelve cups. This generalization is testified by those elders in Kashmir society who are above 90 years in age and are frequent "Nuna Chae" drinkers.

Before we examine the preparatory stages of making salt tea, let us evaluate certain generalizations regarding preparing any tea. The ideal preparation of tea is one in which Caffeine is extracted more and Tannin in lowest quantity. Such a preparation also conserves the aroma and flavour. According to some its evanescent qualities are easily lost by careless preparation. From the chemist's point of view the two main essentials in tea brewing are fresh water, freshly boiled, and a three to five minute infusion. The tea used, however, should be suitable to the water of the locality in which one lives. Tea infuses more readily in soft water than in hard. Small, thick, full, teas are required for soft water, brisk, full, flavoury teas where the water is hard. Generally, speaking a five minute impression is best for fully fermented teas like those of India, Ceylon or Indonesia. George F. Mitchell a U.S supervising tea examiner, after investigation, demonstrated that there could be no perfect cup of tea from the consumer's point of view. From a chemical stand point the length of time in which the maximum amount of Caffeine and total soluble matter is extracted, with the minimum amount of tannin, average three minutes after boiling water is poured on the leaves is required. After that time tannin is extracted with only a small amount of Caffeine. Usually, according to Mitchell this makes a skinny cup of tea, lacking body and a certain amount of pungenancy that is desired by all tea drinkers; and of course if cream of milk is added to this beverage, it takes away from the small amount of pungenancy, so that the cup appears even less desirable.

For this reason Mitchell concludes that the best to brew tea is that it be drunk without cream or milk, from three to four minutes and that to be drunk with cream or milk from four to five and even six minutes, as in some teas the real flavor does not come out until after a six minutes infusion.

Encyclopedia Britannica accordingly suggests the following methods as the best practice. Firstly, by the highest grade of the kind of tea suited to ones taste and the locality where you intend to use it; (2) use freshly drawn, slightly soft or slightly hard cold water from the tap or fancet; (3) bring it to a bubbling boil; (4) allow one rounded, standard tea spoonful of tea for each cup of tea required; (5) pour freshly boiling water over the tea leaves in a heated earthen wear, porcelain or glass pot and let them steep for three to five minutes, depending upon the kind of tea used. Stir while infusing; (6) pour off the liquor into another heated China pot, never use the leaves for second time.

Having studied the methods of preparing tea generally, let us examine how unique is the method of preparing salt tea prevalent with the common people in the valley. Kashmiris purchase green leaves or semi-fermented tea leaves called "Pahaer-Chae" from a market. A family with five members or so takes thirty to forty grams, of tea leaves, adding five to eight grams, soda to it. This combined dry powder and leaves are put in a pot and placed on a traditional hearth heated by fuel. Nearly one liter more or less, water is added to the tea. It is boiled till the water is reduced to a minimum possible level. One more liter of water is added to this liquid and is allowed to be boiled again till the water is reduced to its minimal level. The process of boiling and reducing water into minimal level normally takes half an hour. After this process one liter is added to the residuary but this time it is only heated but not reduced to minimum level. This liquid is known in Kashmiri "Tyouth" (black aspect of tea)". The process of boiling extracts more Caffeine in the tea and makes it not only tasty but also retains tannin at the lowest. By the same time Samawar, is kept ready with ambers put into its fire pipe. Tyouth is poured into Samawar and fresh water, Kashmir has soft water, is added to it, depending on whether you require strong or light tea according to the tastes of the family members. Usually, the whole family is conditioned to a particular type of tea drinking because its time consuming method of preparation hinders individual choice. Simultaneously milk and salt is added to it in the Samawar. Once the tea in the Samawar is of the taste of the family member or members and boils to overflow, the tea is served. Samawar, an ideal apparatus has central Asian origin and it is believed that during ancient and medieval time Kashmir had close relations with areas in that region. It has virtue of keeping salt tea hot, till one can consume it or till the ambers in the fire pipe of the Samawar continue to burn. Hot tea is fondly liked by Kashmiris.

Kashmiris like that tea must have flavour and taste. This taste they believe is enhanced if it is boiled again and again both on the hearth and in the Samwar. There are elders who attribute the taste in salt tea to the milk thickening due to boiling. Over boiling the tea leaves or salt tea in all process is not harmful to health according to common people in the valley. They believe that their history and experience proved it to be health giving and health protecting. It may be harmful to individual cases but the assertion cannot be generalized. Salt tea, therefore, in Kashmir, is the beverage and nutrition for the people suited to their climate and geography. Unadulterated tea leaves, salt, soda and milk make the salt tea a unique tea for human consumption.

In short, Nuna-Chae or Shir Chae or salt tea is both beverage and nutrition to the common people in the valley. It is used twice a day. At the breakfast, it is two to twelve cups, depending upon the taste and the conditioning of the drinking individual. It is drunk with "Chochavour or: Chut" or "Kolcha" or Aeb-chut (all Kashmiri prepare varieties of bread) or home consume "Suth" with tea. "Suth is a substance in the form of a powder prepared out of milled maize or wheat but the ideal one is prepared out of cooked rice. Gujars and many common people take cooked rice with salt tea. In the evening Kashmiris use a second dose of this tea with bread. Twice salt tea and twice cooked rice make a full day for a Kashmiri in the valley.

My readers will excuse me because I pushed common man in the article or the man who uses salt tea and not the Babus and the elites whether governing or non-governing. I left such classes or stratifications or urbanized gentry, on the ground that their traditional tastes have changed both on account of media advertising agencies propagating for other brands of teas on behalf of national, international and transnational corporations and anti salt tea campaign by pseudo doctors. Further the "Tabba" culture that was introduced in the valley during last five decades, the institution of Samwar is relegating to the background. Thanks to the common man tea brewer, who survives it till date.

Humbly, therefore, I suggest to the learned doctor in Kashmir to come out with concrete evidence if any against the salt tea after examining it in the laboratory or accept my generalizations. It needs scientific investigations and I lack science in me. However, I initiate—let the challenge be responded.

AN ELITIST MARRIAGE FUNCTION IN SRINAGAR

Marriages take place in heavens believe some, others call it a contract. There are many who believe it to be a legal prostitution. When someone asked why a bride weeps on bidding farewell to her parental home, the other replied that a groom has to weep for the whole of life time. To many the marriage is then an evil. Some Europeans may discard it as redundant—and Platos may deem it discordant. However, all take it either natural or religious. Every father, exceptions apart, are desirous to marry their sons according to their choice and sons like to marry according to their own liking. Thus marriage is a necessary evil.

Muslims in Kashmir, as elsewhere, treat it as Sunna, but perform it in a non-Sunna style. In particular the elitist concept of marriage in Srinagar is mise en scene. When you ask a member of an elite section of society why they spend so much of money and energy on a marriage ceremony, they are uniform in replying that they have to maintain their decorum and they are helpless before womenfolk, confess some.

This September, I had an experience of participating in a couple of elite marriage functions in Srinagar. One invitation was extended to me by Ex. Chief of the Engineering Department and the other by an Ex-Principal of a Degree College. My experience was revealing.

Men, in both collective and individual behaviour are unpredictable, Kashmiri in particular is uncertain. In the pre-militancy period Baraat was scheduled to be taken out around 10 PM bride's house, but in actual practice Baratis were served dinner not earlier than 1 to 2 at night. During the last six years, when the movement of the people was restricted on account of insecurity, the Baraat alongwith the groom was invited for the lunch. That is marriages take place during day. Marriages performed at night,

concealed many lapses on behalf of the poor and the rich bride's father (Korimol). Assuredly, ceremonies during day are naked and reveal what sometimes is not desirable. The lunch now supposed to be served between 1 and 2 pm, is served between 5 and 7 pm as in the past. So at present for Kashmiris lunch can be dinner and dinner can be lunch or as we had in Kashmir tradition a meal called 'Nimuz' which used to be served between lunch and dinner. So on the two dates a lunch (feast) was served to me at 4:30 or 5:30 and extended till 6 to 7.30 pm. Kashmiris have no sense of time.

The Musalmans, used to marry their daughters to some near relation which has now almost been abandoned in the middle or the upper classes. Now relations are struck according to their economic and sometimes hereditary status. Personality, both in case of youth and the girls is also a greater consideration. In personality, the main motivating force to select a husband or wife is handsomeness of the youth and the beauty of the girl. Education by and large has minimal weightage but technical personnel get the highest bid. Money consideration is the most important factor in binding youngsters into the wedlock. To take a boy into one's house (gare-peth) as a system has mostly been abandoned. The system of taking a boy into one's house is still in practice in villages but is very rare. It has lost its popularity. The reason is obvious. The girls, nowadays, once wedded, influence their husbands so much that they feel their identification in their own parental house (Malun) than in the association of husband's parental home (Wa-ru). The girls see to it that their children stay with their maternal relations (Mata-mal) than with the parental kins. Every wedded son nowadays, is more a Garepathuk than a son.

As a Baraati (person accompanying a Baraat), therefore, I had many intellection. The first related to the timing as said earlier also. One of the invitation cards foot-noted that Baraat would leave at 2.15 pm sharp and actually it left at 4pm and the other fixed the time at 2 pm and left at 4 pm. Accordingly, on both dates as a VIP I had to use a "Nimuz" which to me means a meal enjoyed without a schedule.

Being neither a rich man nor a poor man, one hesitates to keep myself even in middle class. I had to behave as an elite or a member of a 'creamy layer' of my society. All the Baraatis in both the marriage functions included doctors, engineers, bureaucrats, professors, judges, retired as well as in-service, businessmen and young and chief among them the groom

who was most respectable for all. On both the marriages we could enjoy the cavalcade of cars one without symmetrical model and other modelized Marutis. The procession of cars was lead by a pilot car, allowing a cameraman to point the camera towards the cavalcade of cars, which moved from the groom's house to the bride's residence.

Not to my surprise, when we reached the bride's house the womenfolk from the groom's family at a distance in rings reciting the 'Wanwun'—wanwun, which is a form of folk songs sung on the marriage occasions. When we entered the main gate the invited ladies of the bride's clan were set in rings for singing the Wanwun. These ladies looked glamorous, neatly and decently dressed but plethoric make up. The women both young and old educated and illiterate, beautiful and uncomely, sung and when we were nearing to finish the feast they started dancing and singing (Gewun). Assuredly everything or the whole marriage scenario looked elitist, decent, fibrous but without buntings. No buntings were hanging, no welcome plates were discernible but Srinagar "creamy layer" of society was within my purview in big halls on both the occasions.

Life is sometimes coincidence of situations. The two marriage feasts which one had the chance to participate were held in the two halls which were the same design. Each hall could accommodate nearly two hundred people or more at a time for a feast. We had feast, an elitist feast served between 5-7pm. On both the occasions I and my colleagues at the Trami (big plates in which four people take meals) were tired to eat and sit because rounds of dishes continued unabated. Eight to ten meat preparations, added to it vegetable preparations upto six or eight and minimum four chatnnis. It is really interesting to note that youth and old tried to do justice with the feast. Alas, not to speak of old men, even youngsters could not do justice to the meal. Most of it was surplus and got wasted.

The description of the elitist feast or wedding function is not a new experience for you and me. What is significant is the intellection that probes into the minds of those amongst whom you are placed. A doctor told me that the present social scenario is caused by the conflict of egos. One would not like to dispute it. Ego conflict, whether individual or collective, is mainly the result of absence of the respect for the elders. During the last six years elders have lost their relevance in the social fabric. One would not suggest that the youngsters do not respect the elders, but if they do so they only falsify the practice. For them respect is ceremonial. One would not say that

elders are above board but, what I suggest is that the ego can be in conflict with egos of the same class not vis-a-viz the elders. Elders and the youngsters should have no conflict of egos for they differ in class and experience. It is surprising that a youth writing in a local daily sometime back suggested that all elders should be killed. A young girl told me and my friend that retired personnel need not be granted pension. It is conflict of 'egos'. No doubt the crisis with these youngsters is their identity.

On the grand halls of the feasting nobody was prepared to discuss politics, which was a common phenomenon few years back. When a retired judge was asked a question pertaining to politics, he simply evaded. A doctor simply suggested to me that he does not understand politics. When I suggested to him that every individual is a political man he simply called it a fallacy. Elders as well as youth were silent about politics though in earlier times one could witness Kashmiris to be known for political gossip.

Watching a Kashmiri, particularly when you participate in grand elitist feast of serious nature, is not only interesting but revealing. When one looked at the face of a media man who tried to conceal himself in a corner of a porch one could adjudge that he was grim. Possibly he had lost his entity in the association of many grandees in the hall. It can also be conjectured that he did not feel as high as he could think of himself while broadcasting on the air. One of my hosts, accompanying the groom as Izman, (father of the groom), looked serious but elated. Possibly he was satisfied with the arrangements he could observe. He was, one felt, elite amongst so many elites. A father of an engineer looked so content that he moved out singly and toweringly. He was satisfied beyond satisfaction.

Man sometimes feels depressed and sometimes looks very smart—smartness with youth is natural. A young teacher of Higher Education, egoistic, looked as if in search of self-identification, which I think he could not seek in urban elite though he was fully conscious of his Khandan. He had put a dress, which he did not make him distinctive yet he managed to see that his presence is felt. An urban superiority was a distinctive feature in his behavior. Some elders, about seventy, five in number were gossiping carefree. One of them an old political activist, two of them hardcore businessmen and one of them a retired central government employee, were busy in gossip. The political activist and the businessmen only heard the central government employee but did not speak. A distinct colour of the invitees reflected a division between elders and the youth. The generation

gap was discernible but the commonality with it was its elitism. Elites should have no crisis of identity but unfortunately what one felt in the company of these invitees was, that they were in search of an identity whether false or real by adding to it the urban superiority.

A city is a brain-drain for the village intelligent class. It was irony of the fate that many of the village intelligentsia, who by dint of their marriage and settlement in the city, were present in the Baraat. They had lost their identity and their faces reflected the fat in the fire. They shuttled, in terms of Erikson's model, between the values and social construction of five stages of adulthood and the post adulthood in which man was widening concern for what has been generated by love and productivity. A Forest Officer, who shuttled between these two norms, was grim because he was developed upto youth in the social construction of a village life while his post adulthood has a paint of urban value system. He is not in a position to shun the love and the productivity which he has carried with him from the rural life. It is unfortunate that in post adulthood he is enamored by the self-centered life of the urban nature. On the other hand his son who was the strong identity crisis, moved with the Baraat as a lone man in a lone car. He did not even like to be amongst his friends—conscious of being seen and exalted by the opposite gender. The son and the father were both confusing identities—one struggling within and the other struggling without. The later in search of urban superiority which could relieve him of the taunt of his urbanized mother that he was a "village bull" after his father's ancestry.

In both the marriage functions, the ratio between old and young was not equal and one could not count heads to denote and know how many youngsters and the elders were present and in crisis of identity. However, most of the elders, like the last stage in Erikson's scheme, had the crisis of integrity v/s despair and the strength of wisdom. The youth, in assembly had mostly identity crisis and therefore were neither interested in the integrity or despair of their elders nor did they have trust in the strength of the wisdom of elders. Accordingly, the two generations present in the Baraat looked askance. All had lost something, somewhere, someway—possibly they had lost conscience or the spirit that could bind them together and act together. They looked something beyond, not mundane, above social constructional design, above sophisticated hall and porches, someone above serving them, glasses from above pouring water as if nectar, Waza from

heavens placing dishes on the Trami as if heavenly bodies in a lotus land touching some prohibitive plate, Baraatis sitting on carpets of celestial character—an invitee, a retired judge, a confused man, combined in rural consciousness and urban selfishness, trying to identify himself in an urban society, raised his hands to pray, in a chopped voice,

“Praise be to Allah, who is our nourisher, sustainer and who motivated us to Islam”.

This elitist Baraat, its existence, drunk in the wealth of its own identity and superiority, enjoying the melody of marriage, is neither conscious nor interested in returning to the marriages of the common people. The marriages of millions of people, go unsung and without melody. The marriage of the Muslim elite had nothing in their feast or the function, which could have an odour of the marriages of Prophet's (PHB) time. Then! Was it modern sense or sensibility?

PEERIZATION OF SOCIAL LIFE

The word Peer is derived from Persian language which means old or oldman or a saint or a faqir or what may be termed a man of virtue. According to Fredric Drew,

“Peer in Persian means first, old or old-man, and thence a saint or faqir. It is common for faqirs to establish themselves for the sake of contemplating the works of God and of receiving the alms of travelers: when any noted holy faqir died on a pass, the place became sacred to his memory, and was often called after him, his title of pir being prefixed. At last it became so common for every important pass to have a name beginning with Pir that the word acquired the secondary meaning of Mountain Passes”.

M.A Stein agrees with Drew as far as the use of Persian word peer is concerned. However, he does not agree to attribute the word to the custom of connecting mountain passes with the holy personages. Stein believes that the names of the passes rested on far older foundations. According to him the graves of the faqirs attached to the name of the passes is the muslmanization of the older Hindu tradition of ‘Devas’ as Srivara tells us of a fatal chill he caught on the top of the Pancaldeva. According to Stein, therefore peer is the nearest Muhamadan equivalent to ‘Deva’.

Let us be content with the definition of peer as a man of virtue and that of being a Persian word but during last six centuries in Kashmir, peers established themselves as a class, evolving their own family culture and a life style. Peers thus constitute a class, even today, who include sections of a single group in Kashmir society. It includes Syeds, Muftis, Molvis, Sheikhs, Babas, Wazkhans, and Peerzadas, religious scholars, intellectuals, disabled and handicapped who are proficient in religious education. They all devote themselves selflessly to worship and meditation raising them spiritually higher than others. Most of them barring Syeds racially belong to the

Sheikhs according to historian Hassan Khuihame. The reason attributed to it is that the lineage of their ancestors is traced to Kashmir Brahmins or Pandits. On their conversion to Islam, they took to Islam parasti (devotion to Islam). According to M.A Stein the change of religion presented no advantage to the Brahmans because they retained their inherited status together with its literary traditions on their conversion to Islam. They upheld the Islamic learning more zealously as newly converts. Jonaraja, Srivara and even Muslim chroniclers uphold this view. According to Hassan Khuihame, they organized groups of disciples, who are named as Mureeds (disciples). Peers posterity for a long period continued to uphold a character which was based on Islamic values. Such people after conversion, assumed the religious duties at the shrines and at the tombs of saints and spiritual personalities. According to Hassan, these people entered into marriage ties with the families of Sadaat (Syeds) and remained in their intellectual association. Some of them adopted other professions than those of priesthood. These priests adopted 'Molvi' as presumptory title. The nomenclature was adopted by virtue of ones scholarship or due to prominence of being religious intellectual. Today Molviship is conferred at the completion of religious education by the universities, by denominational institutions of even by state run universities. In Kashmir, according to Hassan, there were only few families, who enjoined the Molvi title by virtue of acquiring scholarship as a hereditary achievement. Amongst all such families there was only the family of Molvi Abdulkhair, which retained the scholarship superiority. The Mullah is also suppositious title and is divided in three sub classes. Firstly, those Mullahs, who in Srinagar or in rural areas lead Namaz in mosques, such people before 1947, lived mostly on charity and presents made by various people. The Second one is the group of Mullahs, who used to dig graves and perform its related duties called Malla Khosh. The third group of Mullahs was assigned the duty of stitching coffin and conducting bath of the dead, are called till date 'Gosal'.

Historically, the class established its identity and conferred on its member's honour, respect, probity and esteem. No doubt this class till 1947, exceptions apart, was responsible to conduct the illiterate people of Kashmir to Islam and carry it to the present. This was a tremendous task they performed historically. Giving due cognizance to the situations prevailing from the time of Sultan Sadr-ud-din to the end of Dogra rule in 1947, the class established spiritual ascendancy. They did it by dint of devotion to

learning Islam and conducting the ignorant people to the religious education. They remained engaged in self-study, contemplation, and performance of penance and the study of the Quran, the Sunna and performing and leading the Nimaz. These Peers were entrusted with the duty of preserving the intellectual and spiritual culture of the society. They officiated as priests and recited Nats or hymns in the shrines or mosques. The postulates from the stories of Islamic history were translated and narrated by them to the people in Kashmir. Thus, they acted as religious guides, preachers and educators. The women folk of the Peers taught the children of the masses, the holy book of Quran both recitations (Nazira), translations and interpretations. Such Muktabs both run by Peers and their females were available in Srinagar and in rural areas of Kashmir till late fifties. The Muktab has by now been replaced by Darsgah. The Peers and their females were used to get gifts either in kind or in cash on account of the performance of a religious ceremony, death or marriage functions or related matters. The presence of Peer was essential on all occasions and payment was voluntary. There were rules observed on certain occasion and no rules at other events. For example a female teacher received from her pupils ten paisa (Auna) on every Tuesday (Bomwari poand) and one egg on every Friday (Jumma Thool) as a rule. Hindu concept of Gurudakshina is the rationale behind it. However, on marriage functions and death ceremonials, the Peer expected enumeration according to the economic status of the effected family.

Historically as soon as Peers established their class, they developed class consciousness. They evolved their own kith and kin and tried to remain exclusive of other social groups. They advanced their own ethos of culture. Their family culture graduated on the foundations of their historical and cultural heritage of Hindu society. In traditional Peer family, therefore tolerance, education both religious and worldly and other virtues reigned. In such family, purdah of the women was exemplary. None in such family used abusive or profane language. They trained children to speak decent language—they made them read and write properly. Their behavior was well regulated. They did not touch smoking and hence neither Huka nor cigarette was traceable in the house of the Peer. Traditionally, the children revered their parents and the later respected their children suffixing 'saib' with their name. The family happened to be an ecstasy of spirituality. Their ancestors left history for their posterity—history of intellectual life and remained in the atmosphere of their own exclusiveness. They worked little

and they were for purposes of bread and butter, 'parasites' according to some in society. However, value oriented society as we had in the past considered them as intellectuals and were looked after by them. State, those days did not patronize the intellectuals. They (people) also cherished social integration and did not mind to safeguard their interests. People in their collective consciousness, treated them creamy section of the society and respected them well. In return Peers gave them more than what they deserved in terms of religious education and continuity of their cultural personality. We understand that till 1947, no social prejudices were experienced by this class. The different sections of society lived as independent groups. There was enough of social integration till various sections of society were politicized during last fifty years. This social integration is visible in most of the contemporary literature in Kashmir. Mohd Din Fauq's book *Aqwami-Kashmir* and A.A Azads notable work, *Kashmiri Zuban Aur Shairi*, is the best specimen, who in their writings clearly describe the social integration of various groups of society. Though GMD Sufi has suppressed the Hindu history of Kashmir yet his treatment of Muslim period is without prejudice and provides an insight into history by saying:

"The student of history is not permitted to play the role of prophet. His function is to chronicle events, and to emphasise the lessons of those events for the good of mankind".

Historically, the class so developed that in due course of time it was but to be reckoned with. In the theory of power, in any society, the priestly power is considered as one of the forms of traditional power. In Kashmir, in Hindu period it had its own life style and homogeneity—when it reorganized in the converted Kashmir, it restored its traditional character. The traditional character of the people in Kashmir, a legacy of Hinduism was influenced in addition to many other factors, by two historical reasons. One was that Kashmiris respect shrines more than anything else—they belonged to a Sufi cult. Secondly, Kashmiris used to believe themselves to be under curse and to overcome it, they accordingly believed that:

"The saints will aid if men will call".

They thought and think that dead saint is more efficacious than a living priest. Thus Peer parasti, according to Lawrence is an epithet, well deserved by Kashmiris. Peers therefore, wielded considerable influence till 1947, for spiritual and mundane development nonetheless this class had established certain distinctive characteristics. Apart from their worship to

Allah, strictly in accordance with the Quran and the Sunna, it established a class consciousness, which adhered to Islam and projected a moral style of life. They did not lie, abided by their promises, and helped people in religious and mundane achievements. They were selfless and never avenged against anybody. Most of them were charm of their areas and the society. They tried to be virtuous. They propagated against greed, jealousy, selfishness and so on. They lived a simple life and disdained pomp and show. The people in the valley respected them and thought peer to be a link between Allah and the subjects. They cured their diseases, in absence of modern medical aid, as Hakeems as well as spiritual leaders. They cured disease whether ophthalmological, cardiological, nephrological, gynecological or gastro-entriological or the like through their prayers and talismans. Even the bites by mad dog, snakes and others were cured by them. They also claimed banishing all the evil spirits. According to Lawrence a charm from a Peer could arrest the spread of Rai (virus of the rice crop). The peer could through the Talmic or a charm help the Kashmiri regarding:

"The oppression of the rulers, sufferings in time of famine, earthquakes, cholera and meanness, were defeated by their methods of salvation".

Under the visitation of a natural calamity, Kashmiris are silent and submissive but when an official oppresses, they according to Lawrence, talk in loud language to be heard in London. For such calamities whether natural or worldly, the solution was sought through the Peer and his amulets. The people in general, before 1947, had greater efficacy of amulets of the Peer—presently it has lessened in its effect. The amulet for many purposes was either fastened on the right or left arm, neck or turban. It was also put in water and ink of the writing after dissolution in water was drunk by the patient. Sometimes the amulet was burnt and the smoke inhaled by the sick man. The inhalation brought or brings dreams and dreams were conveyed to the Peer and he interpreted them. The chief principle in any treatment of the Peer fraternity was and is that illness is caused by the evil spirits (Jin) and the charm suitably prepared, with the name of the patient's mother on it, was to drive out any evil. Today, people have less faith in such charms and such Peers are rare.

The contribution of Peers was not confined to performing religious rituals, curing of diseases and arresting the evil spirits but extended to all types of intellectual pursuits. They did not only enrich Kashmiri language and literature but history, geography, sociology and so on. They proved to

be great mystics, Reshis, poets, scholars, historians Sufis and the like. Though it is not possible for me to write about all, yet let me discuss some contributors of distinction. Amongst the mystic and mystic poets, Lalla Arifa and Sheikh Nooruddin Wali^{RA} are not only prominent but reflect the total ethos of our culture and heritage. Mir Abdullah Bihaqi, through his poetic tales expresses before the principles of the faith, when he confesses:

"I state the principle of faith in Kashmiri,
So that you better understand them".

Coming from a Mulla family, Mahmud Gami is a poetic genius. According to A.A Azad, his poetry has characteristics of spontaneity, simple expression and de-profundity. Amongst the galaxy, A.A Nadim, stands as a distinct Natgo, who was mystic as well. There is hardly a parallel to his Natgo in the literary history of Kashmir. Peer Azizullah Haqani in the hierarchy is also a poet, who was well versed in Arabic, Persian, logic and philosophy. There is a legacy, in Kashmir that poets before 1947, versified both in Persian and Kashmiri. Some initiated in Persian and later returned to write in Kashmiri—Shamsuddin Hearat belongs to this school of poets. His Masnavi 'Rana-wa-Zeeba' is known to us. Maqbool Kralwari known as Masnavi Nigar has distinction of writing in any genre of poetry, whether ballads, lyrics, poems, sonnets and so on. He was true to the Peer tradition. He disdained any deviation from the moral traditions of Islam. He is satiric on different sections of society he lived in particularly those whose beliefs contradicted their performance. His Masnavi Gulrez is the best model of poetry in Kashmiri language and can be presented as a piece of classic literature. Peerzada Mahjoor, on the other hand is eminent on account of his poetic talent. By all canons of poetics, he stands as a romantic poet in the literary history of Kashmir. He is supposed to be the product of the movement launched by the leadership in Kashmir in 1931. His poetry has a charismatic touch to make Mahjoor a popular poet. Amongst noted men of learning we can include Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi, Mulla Muhsin Fani, Baba Daudi Khaki, Mirza Akmaluddin and Molvi Anwar Shah Sahib Lolabi. In history we have Hassan Shah Khuihami, whom W.R Lawrence accepts a learned scholar. He expresses his indebtedness to Hassan in the following words.

"What else of the Kashmiri language I have learnt, I owe to Peer Hassan Shah, a learned Kashmiri, whose work has entirely been among the villagers".

Kashmiri people were for a long period rich in superstition. There was not a mountain, river spring or any area, which was not attributed to some quaint legend. The great mountains had been found demons in the form of fairies. The rivers were rich in legends and there were mighty streams inside the mountains which were heard but were not seen. The mountain tarns were infected by the dragons breathing fire. Monsters at different springs, used to drown unwary travelers. Fairies and pixies found a congenial home in the valley. There used to be houses haunted by ghosts. Early inhabitants Nags, used to visit the world, sometimes with benevolent and other times with mischief intent. Every cave had its story or legend. To all these superstitions, Peer could find a remedy. He exercised all such ills caused by devils and other evil spirits.

Peer as a class comprised cross section of Kashmir society. They did not particularly belong to a special racial or ethnic stock. Peers tried to keep up their class as much exclusive as possible but could not be racially or ethnically distinct. They are racially an admixture. A man from any other inferior group of Kashmir society could be admitted to Peer fraternity who could be acclaimed as spiritually superior personality. Historically, we know that Saint like Nooruddin Wali^{RA} Sheikh Yaqoob Sarfi, were admitted to the galaxy of the Peers on account of their virtuous life. Admission to the peer group thus could be claimed by anybody, who enjoyed superiority on the basis of spiritual attainments. It was, purely, an Islamic principle followed by the society, which the Quran reveals to us through the verse:

"The most honoured of you in the Sight of Allah is
(he who is) the most

Righteous of you. (J 26-S13)

Peers performed many religious and mundane functions. In religious functions he led the five prayers a day, one additional prayer on Fridays and so on. The Muftis and Qazis interpreted the Shariat and the Sunna to settle individual and collective cases. Reshis looked after the shrines and places of sacredness. Peers imparted religious education and settled disputes between their disciples. From November to February, each year Peers from Srinagar visited villages or areas inhabited by their disciples and Peers from villages moved to other villages to contact their Mureeds. Usually an elderman amongst their disciples used to invite their Peer to village.

During these visits Peers led Khatam-ul-Mauzimmat (recitation of special prayers) at the residence of their disciples in accordance with their hierarchical linkage like Dastigiri, Qadri, Suharwardi, Nakashbandai, Mukhdoomi and so on. Amongst Kashmiri Muslims in rural as well as urban areas, one Niyaz (special charity and prayer) every year was a matter of ritual. Such functions at the disciple's residence used to be a day of special worship. On such congregations in the village most of the village disputes like the cases of divorce etc were settled by the Peer. The religious problems were discussed and Peer could give a final judgment. No doubt political and social gossips were also in vogue.

Peers as a class, in due course of time, were subjected to social prejudice. The non-Peer sections and groups of society condemned them as a class. Many people attributed their ignorance, lack of education, and backwardness to the class of Peers. Their contention is that this class intentionally imparted a meager type of education to non-Peer sections and groups of society. Peers disallowed their children of their disciple's right to education and learning. Contrary to it Peers allowed their children to receive Western Education. Similarly, it is contended that Peers allowed their daughters and females to enter the field of modern education but in the name of Shariat (Muslim Law) denied female education to non-peers. Their contention was that even religious education was partially committed to their disciples. Their social prejudice has even gone to accept that names, which were conferred by the Peer on the children of their disciples, were of a very very ordinary nature, whereas the names allotted to their own children were superb. Thus, they attribute their backwardness, whether social, economic or educational, to this class of society. In response to the prejudice, it is contended that given the scenario of the society and the state peers could do nothing except what they contributed. They were responsible to impart religious education, despite many hazards during the rule of Pathans, Sikhs and Dogras. They are proud to have continued religious education historically till date, though they had to undergo many risks. It is also asserted that non-Peer sections of society, before 1947, were economically very weak. Accordingly, they encouraged their children to go for earning rather than for education. At the same time, in spite of the socialized prejudices after 1947, they enjoyed social integration with non-Peer sections of society.

The social scenario, in the post 1947 till date has witnessed a sea change in the social and religious structure of Peers and non-peer sections of the society. Due to free education, Kashmiris not only were educated in modern Professional and non-professional institutions, but even got a chance to embark upon religious institutions like Nadva, Deoband and other denominational institutions in Saharanpur, Muzaffar Nagar and so on. The Muslim youth was exposed to western education as well as religious education at Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia, Delhi and at other places of India. The Muslim youth from all sections and groups were exposed to such institutions resulting in building a new class of Peers associating and working with hereditary Peer class. Thus the present Peer class constitutes members from all sections and groups of society and many of them excelling the hereditary Peers. However, the exposition of the people to the modern science and technology, communication, the present Peer class, leading religious activities is more concerned with their material life than the spiritual one. Peers have become professionals earning bread and butter—if previously it was voluntary, now it is mandatory and the class as such is virtually a salaried class. Anybody can hire them. These Peers are now no spirituals but are professionals. They dedicate themselves less to spiritual advancement and Islamic values and stick more to the mundane advantage.

There is always a competition amongst different groups of society. When a group is more articulate and distinct, the other group is in close competition, follows such a life-style which that group has adopted or inherited. In following the articulate section of society, the competing group satisfies two psychological traits—one to satisfy the self-identification of the group, particularly such members who are first learners, and the second to manipulate the financial security in the society. The various groups in Kashmir social system, during last five decades, went into the process of Peerization. The Peerization is thus, adoption of the life-style of Peers by previously inarticulate sections of society. Their dress, their control of the mosque, religious preaching, hair style, moods and modes of the life of the Peers is adopted by the people, who lack or lacked identification. The women in general imitate the life style of the women of the Peers. The women in rural areas have copied the life-style of Peer women, in dress, more than in urban areas. This process of adopting the lifestyle of Peers continues unabated since last many decades. Though Purdah may have certain advantages, it has certain disadvantages also. The Purdah (veil) of the ladies

in rural areas is restricted to all types of functions and marketing places. It is for the ladies outside home, for working and collecting fuel, the Purdah has no utility. The spirit behind Purdah is known to few ladies in Kashmir. The Muslim youth show a bearded face but most of them hold value free notions and most of their actions do not conform to their ideas.

Elite of any modern society is not subject to any such moral value constraints—their value structure is based on expediency. In Kashmir their social behavior is subject to flexibility and reflects duplicity. Thus, Peerization in Kashmir is not Islamization. Islamization is a wider term, in the context of totality. Islamization is a total adjustment of various groups of society to the value orientation of Islam. Peerization, on the other hand, is adoption of the life style of Peers in their outside manifestations. Today, our society is changing its social web, on account of crisis of identity, seeking individual respectability of the Peers. Unfortunately, the imitation lacks value orientation that particular class had established historically. Even the families, whose fore fathers were Peers, have lost that identification due to their flexibility toward that moral code, which their ancestors followed. The nouveau Peers have neither established their spiritual qualities nor the hereditary Peers have retained their legacy of spiritual ascendancy. Today, everything in the society is Peerization, which in a sense is *modus operandi* for perverse culture.

THE CREDENTIALS OF PANDITS

Though we all belong to the same body and soul, yet if one salams you, showing regard to your traditional Namasti, one would be considered infidel and one would be excommunicated from his own brotherhood, which, for the one, who lacks spiritedness may not be seemly. One would not like to refer to you with 'asalamualikum' possibly it would hurt you. Though both 'Namasti' and 'asalamualikum' may enjoy universal meaning, yet what a difference it makes with the extremist, whether Hindu or Musalman. So let me in our tradition extend 'Aadab' to you.

In the phraseology of our mother tongue, we own a dictum, "Tselith Shaf Nate Marith Shaf" i.e. we cry peccavi either on the escape or on the death of a person. The pricking of the conscience that were caused to the people of the valley since your migration, are enumerable. We experience the pangs of the agony of separation, as if we are lovers. When something unusual happens as human beings, we remain awe stricken—particularly when something is caused in an emotional outburst. Whether you migrated in a fit of harassment, chaos or emotional outfit or under a conspiracy or under the command of destiny, what happened is historical perversion. In the history of your community, you had been turned out of the valley many a time. Some had perished and many of you survived. Some never returned back to our social fabric. You possibly are content that civilization move in a spirit of its own. Brain drain continues—moves from jungles to villages and to cities and finally to the center of the civilization.

My great Pandit, your separation is felt, the agony of separation is undescribable and your absence is a cause to worry. It is not to suggest that you are great and superior, or that we in the valley are great and supreme, but to announce that we are rendered *disjecta membra*. Though the mother of Kashmir brought us together, nourished us and bound us together, yet

alas we could not brave out the challenge of the dismemberment.

In the history of our two communities, we fought together, raised slogans collectively, suffered together under oppressive and suppressive kings or regimes. We were painfully exploited and sometimes we resisted. True that we might have faltered individually, pursued our selfish ends, but collectively we had looked forward for a better future. So far we are fighting for egalitarianism and it seems far distant. During past fifty years, all of you as a community, believed your future to be safe in India—objectively you were within your risk to think so on account of your economic and employment considerations. However, amongst you are many intellectual pundits, who advocated or advocate that future of Kashmir is safe in the accession of it to Pakistan. The reverse is also true. Some Muslims believe that the future of Kashmir is safe in the hands of India. Inclusive of all groups of Kashmir social fabric, there are people as well as intellectuals who desire J&K to be independent sovereign state. We have faltered in one way or the other—err is human. No arguments can justify our omissions.

You and the Musalmans of the valley and its peripheries belong to the same history, civilization and finally to the same culture. All of us have unfortunately not only distanced ourselves from our past but broken from it. You may extol your past, you may be proud of your history or you may glorify it, yet all of us have forgotten your ancient home, “in simplicity sublime” i.e. the land of great Reshis, sages, hermits and ascetics. You belong to the race, which is known in history by virtue of the purity and the moral grandeur of your heritage. You were men who secluded themselves in the dense of forests. You had high moral stature and theocratic history. To discuss the problems of the universe was your favourite past time. You had contempt for wealth and honour. You were known for selflessness, disinterestedness and tolerance. You were Brahmins of supreme conduct and character. All of you and some musalmans, during many years in the past instead of harmony, developed a schism in the soul of Kashmir. Alas, many years in the past you have loved wealth only. You pursue such services and commit to such gains that you think honourable. You have become corrupt as bureaucrats, teachers, engineers, professors and so on. Due to your pursuit of wealth and the false honour, you have lost your respect, which was sacred to your ancestors. The respect you had established for many centuries in the past was for long time so sanctified that even great kings were, “not above rendering homage to you”. These Kings

respected you more than they “dared demand respect for themselves from their own subjects”. You have lost it—you have lost the whole past of your glory. Remember from a man of a text book writer, (the title given to me by a pandit) when a Brahmin becomes corrupt, no power on earth can save their country.

In your lost heritage, in recognition of your tradition in learning, Hieun Tsiang has admitted,

“The people of Kashmir love learning and are well cultured. Since centuries learning has been held in great respect in Kashmir”.

Alberunni has written, “Kashmir is the high school of Hindu sciences”. This again points toward Brahmanic spiritual attainment. Unfortunately, your learning today is directed mostly to learning for earning and not for spiritual attainments. However, you all can console in the historical fact that both life and history is a gradual change. You have to respond to the challenge of modern times. Let you continue to attain material progress as much as you can achieve!

In the historical perspective, from ancient to the present, you tried possibly consciously to retain a separate identity and life. In ancient times even Kings respected you and in the ‘converted’ Kashmir you continued to form a separate and distinctive life. You resisted conversion and remained not only Hindus but Hindu Brahmins. You were generally followers of Shaiva philosophy. You worshipped Vishnu and other deities. Some of you followed the tantric or Shakti doctrine. You worshipped Sharika, Rajnh, Jvala and Bala. You followed eternal Dharma. You believed in four basic postulates. Firstly, you believed in the law of the phenomenal world, which means Karma. Secondly, you thought in terms of the future state in heaven i.e. Surga and thirdly in the immortality and transmigration of the soul. Finally, you believe in a higher power called by the names of Bhagvan, Rama, Krishna and Shiva. Rama Krishna and Shiva rewards the good and punishes the bad, which resides in heaven or in ones own heart you want to achieve unanticipation (Muksha) which might link you with the ultimate reality to avoid human misery. The religious Philosophy that you inherited gives you social integration and it is great achievement that you do not question, amongst yourselves, religious behaviour and belief. Have you, ask your conscience, guarded the pure traditions of Hinduism and taken every care to preserve the integrity of your religion?

You may believe that you belong to the Aryan race but Nilmata Puran by describing fourteen tribes, proves that Kashmiris generally are a racial admixture. All the tribes described in Nilmata are not Aryans by race. By living a separate life, you might have retained your racial primacy but your features suggest that you are both Aryans and Jewish like other communities living in the valley. However, you may claim true to George cambell that, "the Kashmir Brahmins are quite High Aryan in the type of their features—very fair and handsome, with high chiseled nose and no trace of intermixture of the blood of any race. "All of you resisted persuasion or force, and did not convert to Islam, retaining your racial superiority. That Aryan class, who converted, lost their identity but you gripped well, your personality as Brahmins. Neither those who converted nor you as Aryans could strictly adhere to purity of race in social interaction during last five thousand years—we are a racial admixture.

My dear Brahmins, you are divided in 199 exogamous section or Gotras. You profess to be descendents from the Reshi or inspired saint whose name the gotra bears. Every section of yours is the posterity of a saint. Unfortunately you bear resemblance to none of them. You have lost the spiritual linkage of your ancestors. You are lost in your wealth and materialist attitude. You are Kouls, Bhats, Panditas, Tengs, and Dhars besides gotras. How can I name all Krams or surnames? However, you know the Kouls are supposed to be superior amongst you. Have they given themselves to Atri?

You claim to have been renowned on account of your intelligence and proficiency in learning. This claim for you is everlasting as a historical truth. Your Kashi and Kashmir were famous as the seats of learning—you claim that Kashmir was excelling Kashi in learning. Learned men from Kashi, you assert, used to visit Kashmir for study and learning. You quote illustrious persons to belong to your tradition and culture. You boast your old classics. You may be right in your assertion and Musalmans may affirm it and many amongst them may not dispute it but assuredly your glorification of the past has tremendously affected your psyche. You have become egoistic. Your men in governing elite have distanced themselves from the common people (whether own or other community members) of Kashmir. The non-governing elite amongst you also feel egoistic and never come down to earth. They fly high both in thought and belief. They feel intellectually superior. So far as the common Kashmiri Pandit is concerned, he suffers the same way as the common Kashmiri Musalman.

We shared a common heritage of a Kashmiri language. The language had come down to us as Polyglot of words from many languages—Prakrit, Sanskrit, Urdu, Persian, Turkish and so on.

You have proved unfaithful to it as much as the Kashmiri Musalman. Those amongst you who contributed in the growth of this language for the last five decades, is recognizable but it is asserted that your family abandoned it. One of your elder, woman or Mata told me, "Gashe Drav by air", i.e. "Gasha left by air". One word from mother tongue in conversation does not make a language. Musalmans on the other hand are equally unfaithful to their language by saying, "Eader pathar bethoo", i.e. be seated here. You were more Indians than they were and they were too religious in their approach. Please ask your conscience how much you are faithful to your language.

You complain that political changes in Kashmir brought to you series of the most tragic tales. You underwent many ordeals during ancient and medieval times. You were many times subjected to terrorism and slaughter. In the reign of Rajadeva, Sahadeva, Shamir and Rinchan Shah followed by Lankar Chak and many, you assert, oppressed and tyrannized you. Zulqadar Khan alias Dulchu also thrust you to rack and ruin. Later Sikander Shah, in the name of Islamization, and through your own converted Kin Suha Batt, perpetuated tyranny against you. After 1489, Shudder to read the oppression caused to you by bigoted Muslim sects who ruled Kashmir. When Moghuls conquered Kashmir, some of their governors were no exception to perpetuate iron rule against you. Pathans tormented you You call their rule as darkest age of Kashmir. Sikhs invited by Pt Birbal Dhar showed sympathy to you. Dogras were the rulers, who during their reign respected you and carried administration through you. The conscience of historians, one would not question, but it is true that many Muslims treat Sikander Shah as hero in the history of Kashmir. You treat him as an iconoclast. You treat Zainul Aabiddin as secular ruler whom you consider a saviour for you at that time. Some Muslims treat Zainul Aabiddin as a traitor to Islam. However, one thing that both the communities share is suppression, oppression and exploitation from their rulers during last six hundred years, when the two communities separated on the basis of religious methodologies. Does it mean that Kashmiries lack the sense of togetherness that could resist oppressions and warrant a constitutionalism? Why you as intellectuals and Muslims as power base, being together, could not carry that theo-

cratic system of Sikander Shah or secular system of Zainul Aabidin, whichever could suit all of us?

Many of you have and had eminence. You preserved Kashmir history, culture and so on. You have been poets, historians, dramatists, singers, short story writers and enjoying many more talents. Your elders read the holy book Quran, wrote and spoke the presian language, but when Muslims abandoned, you had no compulsions to own it. You have been our teachers, Professors, Doctors, Engineers, Bureaucrats and what not. You must be genuinely proud of your contribution in influencing the Musalman of Kashmir. Except Pandits like, 'Baqayas', you guided us in the offices or administration, forestry, Engineering..... i.e, every walk of life. Your learning and Hindu Philosophy made you humanist and top loyalty to Kashmir society. Alas after 1947, you shunned your past, your philosophy of Dharma and your links with the ultimate reality to avoid human misery; you became obsessed with your 'self'.

What happened in the ancient and medieval Kashmir may be distant for all of us but in modern times what has happened is a sham for all of us, as Kashmiris. You condemned Kashmiri Musلمان for all the wrongs committed against you and they censured you for all the evil doings perpetrated against them. You are reprobated on the ground that your community members influenced the great Sheikh to convert the Muslim conference into the National Conference i.e. to move from theocracy to secularism. You are ostracised that you manipulated accession of the state to India in and around the middle of 1947. You are discredited on account of the arrest of the Sheikh in 1953, as many think that it was 'Pandit think tank' which influenced Delhi to take decisions regarding Kashmir. You were treated by the majority community as king makers in the state. Any wrong committed to the people of Kashmir by Delhi was attributed to your intelligence and manouring. Your migration was also articulated to a conspiracy in which your security was sought as against the insecurity of the people of Kashmir. Domestically you were treated to be insincere in teaching in colleges and schools. That you held better posts and you helped community members in offices and so on.

Musalman on the other hand also insinuated you on a different plane. They used to say "you cannot skin off a stone, so you cannot make a pandit a friend," in Kashmiri "kane vassya poss, Batte banya Doss". Musalmans would readily remark "these kafirs are unreliable". Sometimes the com-

munity members would remark that Kashmiri Pandits want to reduce or perish the majority in the state and so on. You also were, every time given to the taunt of "Dali Bata" referring to your cowardice. On the other hand your remarks about Musalmans were equally undesirable. You used to say that, "musalmans are like snakes, and you may feed them with milk, they will not hesitate to bite you. "How can a Muslim become a sincere friend," you would remark. Muslims would doubt, "How can a Batta become a sincere friend?"

On both the sides doubts persisted but did not affect our aphrodital personal relations. Believe me that those who leveled charges against you now admit your great contributions to our social fabric. They appreciate your efficiency, tolerance and good personal relations. Actually, you and the Musalman had a balance to strike. Neither you were efficient nor musalmans are inefficient but many amongst both the communities are efficient to save Kashmir. Today, imbalance is struck whether you acted in accordance with your conscience or not, is not ones concern but what relates to everyone is your absence from the social web.

We know that we were friends..... you had harmonious relations with us and we stood by each other. Our personal relations have passed through the test of time. We understood each other. We shared vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. Did you not relish the lunch and the dinner at the marriage functions of your Muslim friends? Did Muslims not inform the bride's father to arrange separate Thali (Plate) for their Non-Muslim friends? Did not Muslim friends of yours participated the marriages of your daughters and sons?

One should not forget inspite of usual interaction between us that the socialized prejudices usually do exist. The militancy of the tongue and the pen continued on both sides, during last fifty years. You interpreted Kashmir history after your thought and style, and Muslims did the same. To many Muslims the Hindu history of Kashmir does not exist and to many, Rajtarangini is a plethora of myths. To many pandits Muslim history is a betrayal to Indian Civilization. You preached and advocated Indianness and Muslims tried for Musalmanlization. You are the slaves of your egos; both the communities have falsely developed a crisis of identity though our history had resolved it.

For most of the contemporary Kashmir, you were either bureaucrats, teachers, engineers, doctors, professors or businessmen and so on. It is sug-

gestible that our friendly relations were mostly caused by employee and employer relations. Before 1947, you were in power and Muslims were in cordial relations with you because you were governing elite. In the scenario of post 1947, Muslims in certain cases became employers and you were reverted to the status of employees. In both the types of relations, both the communities were compelled to create friendly relations for economic and dependence considerations. Muslims were anxious to gain patronage of a Kashmiri Pandit for employment purposes and cultivation of your land before 1947. Land belonged to you in pre-1947 feudal system and Muslims acted as vassals. Agrarian reforms in early fifties and onwards, land went to the tiller, reducing you to the petty middle class. You became anxious to gain patronage of Muslims during last fifty years because feudal economy changed to a semi-social economy. The rich amongst you, found their voluntary exit from the valley to seek employment elsewhere but the poor pandit continued to remain with its petty Muslim class and remained faithful to Kashmir and his religion. Alas in 1990, to seek security even this poor class migrated. This poor class lost everything and more so the spiritual bond that they enjoyed with common class Muslims. This poor class was embedded in an eternal web with their Muslim counterpart.

Many believe that you and the Muslims have to live together. You thought, "We have to live with them". Muslims thought, "We have to live with them with an advantage". In our heritage we Muslims had decided to go without beef and you abandoned pork. There was mostly no conflict in our social interaction. You consumed mutton of a sheep dressed by Musلمان. We both cherished dry vegetables during winter and fresh ones during summer. In winter we were fond of Ale-hatche (dry gourd) Ruwnagan-hatche (dry tomato) ferraie Gade (fried fish in burning grass) Hokhe-gade (dry fish) Khanda gade (dry scissored fish) and so on. There are many more eatables but let me not mention all for their absence with you presently, might hurt your sentiment. In using the dress, you and Musلمان, male and female had little difference. You used the same phero (gown), Kurta (Shirt) and Kutna (trouser) and so on. Both the communities had, by all cannons of similarity, retained the ancestral and cultural colouring.

At times, we behaved uncomely and many times rationally. When Muslims used to be together, they talked against you and behaved like ex-

tremists. When you assembled together you behaved like communalists—surprisingly when Muslims and you gathered together, all of you behaved like brothers. In short at individual relations all Kashmiris behaved rationally. This social behavior of ours during our community-wise assembly is accordingly not understandable. This irrational behavior cannot be ethnic, but either economic or religious. One would treat it as the articulation of community interest. The network of friendly relations between you and Musalmans, for example, in mixed localities, was particularly non-communal. Habba Kadal, Karan Nagar, Raj Bagh, Zaina Kadal areas and most of the villages where mixed population, were, ideal examples of interpersonal relations. There was no segregation of population in all the mixed localities, in the valley of Kashmir. Then why do you demand a separate haven?

When you or your counter part community members faced any crisis, they stood each other. You protected Musalmans and they protected you. It is in the knowledge of all of us that individuals confronted members of their household for protecting life and property of their neighbours, or friends belonging to the other community. Occasionally, few individuals build relationships based not on the principles of friendship but established it on certain ulterior motives, but such people are present in every community and ethnic groups and can be treated as parasites. Shalina Mehta observes, "In any situation of aggression and violence, if few individuals fight in the name of commune, identity or for protection of rights, few others in the same situation would be given exemplary evidence of human consideration, protection of values which are universalistic and not particularistic to a religious community or society". Generally, in all situations you and the Musalmans respected each other, both as emotional and rational human beings. If you ask anybody, at present in the valley about our previous inter-community relations, they would readily admit that it was objectively determined. No emotionalisation was attached to it as it historically developed. Our identity as Kashmiri was more important than their affiliation to any particular creed or belief. No doubt, both the communities picked up their friendship on the basis of compatibility and mutual interest.

You faced all the four seasons of the valley together with the majority. In spring you enjoyed with the Musalmans the flowering of almonds, around Hari Parbhat. You used to go to the surroundings of hillock, during Badam

Wairi (Almond orchard) on picnic and worshipped your deities and your brothers as you used to call them would visit Mukhdoom Sahib's shrine for meditation. You accompanied your friends of the other religious community to Nishat, Shalimar, Harwan, Nagin and the Dal Lake and the Durgah Hazratbal. You were seen together at Ashmuqam, Mattan and Chrar-e-sharief. You enjoyed Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and the world famous tourist spots in Kashmir. You were seen going together to the shrines of Baba Rishi and Baba Shakuruddin and other similar places. You know a Muslim shrine is in the vicinity of some deity of yours. Alas, you are forgetting and your children may not at all know in future, that during summer you travelled with Musalmans in the hilly tracks of Kashmir, and accompanied you to your sacred Amarnathplace at Anantnag. The autumn, a melody of seasons, brought you face to face with fruits of the year. You enjoyed the juicy "Nakh Tang" (Pears) and many other plumpy fruits alongwith delicious apple. One of my Pandit friends told me that the delicious apple was full of intoxicating effect. You faced with others the odyssey of winter and rigorous cold. Kangar (firepot) was common to all of you....the poor amongst you carried it with him in the plains whereas the rich have forgotten it. Your poor class has always been faithful to it even after migration.

There are intellectuals amongst you, who believe that no Hindu society exists today, anywhere in the world. Some Musalmans also accept that no Islamic society is available today. If we concede to the views, and then you are as much Hindus as we are Muslims. Both the communities as such lack something very significant. It means that Kashmiris generally are devoid of the fundamental essence of religious education——love, peace, virtuous life and sentiment for co-existence.

For more than five thousand years we lived together. During this period we were subject to our inter-community conflicts, hatred, jealousy, cut-throat competition and so on. However, we also loved each other. We reciprocated love. We fought against each other but at the same time helped each other in crisis and tragedies. We behaved and acted as if we were brothers. We shared "Loll"—i.e. incarnate love. We respected each others shrines and temples and religious places. You bowed your hands before the shrines of great Muslim saints—as if they belonged to you. Musalmans did not interfere in your deities or gods—they cared for you. Hegel's definition that state is god's march on earth is possibly true. Angels possibly designed Kashmir to show god at the end of his visit but instead of examining this

paradise he has resided in it. Accordingly, so far, you and the Musalmans had together shared not only the bounties of this paradise on earth but felt the presence of God in it.

Your daughters, sisters and mothers were respected by Musalmans as their own daughters, sisters and mothers. You also respected the opposite gender of the Musalmans. After all you all belong to the same mother. The great poets of contemporary Kashmir sang the verses of praise for Batta Koor (Daughter of a Pandit). The Musalman called Pandit woman Raza Baye (Panditani) and Pandit mother as Mata. Equally you respected a Muslim mother, sister or daughter and named them as Moji (mother), Baine Jiger (dear sister) and Koori (daughter) and so on. You and Muslim youngsters, in their inter-personal relations behaved as highly cultured boys and girls. Your daughters and sons made friendship with daughters and sons of Musalmans. Many a time your youngsters placed Rakhis on the wrists of their Muslim boys and girls. They behaved wisely in their inter-personal relations. They were guided by their cultural ethos and social discipline.

You, old and young, women and children were supplied water by the springs, rivers, canals, waterfalls, lakes, mountain-springs and Nullah's everywhere. You shared baths in the Veith (you call it Vitasta and others call it Jhelum), with the Musalmans of Srinagar and elsewhere. You enjoyed water of Madhumati in Bandipore, Vessu Nullah in Shopian, Lidder in Anantnag, Sindh in Ganderbal, Puhroo in Handwara and the great Veith from Khannabal to Khadanyar and many more. You have enjoyed Kashmir alongwith other communities in its natural beauty. How great are the people of Kashmir including you to have been brought up in such a land? Have you forgotten it or have you abandoned it or both?

Your weakness or strength, balanced the weakness or strength of the Musalmans. This accommodation created a balanced Kashmir social system. When a Musalman called you Vasudev Tul (A nickname after mulberry tree), you tolerated and did not use force. Instead you removed the tree but when you of your own fault, became Vasudev Khud (pit), you converted it to Teng by filling the pit, to the height of a mound of earth. You did not resist—you withdrew like great Brahmans. Musalmans nicknamed you sometimes abused you, but still you did not shun Muslim society. You dubbed Muslims as ignorant, meelech but they too tolerated. You ruled Musalmans many a time tyrannically and they ruled you many a time oppressively but you and they never broke from each other. You and

their common man have shared poverty together. These qualities of weakness and strength between you and them had never challenged their bond of eternal web. Why have you this time voluntarily dismembered yourselves?

When our social Carvan moved ahead you and Musalmans lost many things together. That which we lost was caused either by our apathy or the compulsion of changing world. Some may call it cultural invasion and some may deem it as a cultural evil that must be abandoned. Kashmiris carried with them after 1947, professionals and theatres like Band, Band Jeshan, Bande Pather, Bacha Naghma, Wanwun, Gewun and Ruf—many of them alas lost their existence due to TV and radio culture. Alas! God forbid by loosing all cultural rituals we may not loose the poetic talent of our women. In our history our women was our poetry. Some lost their existence due to Mullah and the extremist. The Wanwun alone which due to the resistance of our great women folk, before whom even the extremist bows out has persisted. Yours and Musalman's Daleel Gour (story teller) is lost. You lost many customs but retained your Talba Gour (Tablaman) and music and worship. Musalmans retained Nimaz and other parts of worship but lost his self abnegation. However, in many things, both you and the Musalmans are losers—losers in all their economic, social, religious, moral and political sense.

You were known for your humanism. You had sanctity of a Guru. You were incarnate humility. Your spirituality was known to all and Rajtarangni is full of spiritual powers that kings, saints, priests and purhotas had assumed. You had in your history worked out your salvation. You had fought pious battles. Your ancestors were heavenly minded people. You are the children of the holiest and your forefathers had achieved sacredness. You preached humanism and even now you preach it but you only talk about it. You do lip-service to your religion. Now you assume piety. You have turned Odium theologicum. You may take recluses that other religious people also behave the same way. However, this much of change is not expected of the Brahmins. What you have presently lost is that humanism which was distinctive feature of your character. For the last five decades, you have worshipped Lakshmi rather than Bhagwan, Rama, Krishna and Shiva.

The Musalman of the valley salutes those amongst you, who stayed back at the cost of his life but survived gracefully in the eyes of their Muslim brethren. Such Brahmins had not loved wealth or life—they are faithful

ful to Kashmir and Hinduism. Amongst them my teacher, colleague, Pandit Kashi Nath Bhat, Bandipore died gracefully at his residence. The teacher was cremated, when possibly his children, seeing the Muslim breathe at the occasion, might genuinely have thought that their father was a great soul in taking right decisions in staying back. The Muslims of the area even now salute him for the great values that he upheld as a humanist. They all are Tritons amongst the minnows. The Muslim hearts bleed, their consciousness is blurred, their conscience is interrogated, they feel that you have proved self-centered and worshippers of Lakshmi only. Otherwise a Brahmin could neither be afraid of death nor that of "Sada Satti". Lord Mecauly's eternal lines may suit your migration and remind you of your past blemish:

To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late;
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds
For the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his gods?

The Musalmans of Kashmir, regret your exodus, some consciously and some unconsciously. They feel something is missing in their social fabric. Those who had personal relations with you are pained and agonized on account of your separation. Some reflect on their past relations with you and its memories torment them. Some are relaxed due to your absence and some enjoy the gains that your departure has conferred on them. However, all agree that our love-hate relation was ideal. The historically established social web of Kashmir cannot be easily consigned to oblivion.

Unfortunately, the purpose of writing to you is not to invite you..... I do not possess any mandate from my society nor am I a politician, leader or a political activist who presumes to enjoy the right to talk and act on behalf of others. Throughout my life I remained only a teacher, whether good or bad, and some of you know me, I therefore bid farewell to you with the hope that my words would not hurt you and you permit me to render my analysis down into the pages of history.

SEARCH OF A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

Thirty six years elapsed when I got married at the age of eighteen years. Negotiations and expenditures for the marriage were not only simple but humble. I remember I had to go with a simple ceremony. Two years before marriage, my maternal uncle visited me and enquired of me if I authorized him to institute "Nikah" with a girl whom I knew. Whether I authorized or not the three—one Vakil and two witnesses finalized a 'Nikah' ceremony in my favour. Later, after two years nearly, I rode a horse to my in-laws alongwith fifteen or twenty of my relatives, reached the bride's house where we were entertained and the marriage consumed. My father neither sold me nor did he purchase a daughter-in-law for him. It was a mutual trust. It was the beginning year of the second half of the Twentieth Century in Kashmir.

Marriage is the oldest human institution, starting from the Adam and the eve. In Kashmir, Raj Tarangni tells me that since the colonization of the valley by Kashapa, marriages took place through the agreements or decisions arrived at by parents. Reshis Munis and Pirs did not marry to achieve spiritual heights. In this context, writes Stein, reference was made to a curious form for a marriage contract in ancient Kashmir, found in the third book of the Lokapraksha, in which quantity of gold given in ornaments for the bride was specified. In addition to other terms of the marriage contract, it is indicated in Lokapraksha that five Tolas weight as the quantity of gold was given on the part of the bridegroom and one Tola was presented by the girl's father, in terms of the contract. Much water has flown in Vitasta since then. During Muslim Rule in Kashmir, particularly since King Sadruddin, Muslim marriage continued to be solemnized in accordance with Muslim personal law but cermonized with traditions which were peculiar to Kashmir sociology and cultural heritage. However, both during

Hindu and Muslim periods, marriages were arranged by parents. A tradition, bound the parents to pay a handsome amount to girl's father in most of the families. The amount had to do nothing with the bride. Father of the girl had the exclusive right over the amount so paid.

During medieval times, institution of match makers or 'Manzimyore' was introduced in its pronounced form. This class of people is by now a sect distinct in its professional arrangements. These match makers would introduce girls and their antecedents to the parents of the boys and vice versa and accordingly, after verifications, engagement would take place. During the years till 1947, parents exclusively had the power of decision making regarding the marriage of their children. However, son's father had to pay some amount to girl's father which tantmounted to purchase of a daughter-in-law. The common people in villages, even now pay huge sums to the father of a girl, to bring her into wedlock. The amount so given is exclusively right of the father of the girl. In non-Muslims in the valley, the father, or a pandit lives, with a sole motive, to earn for his daughter's marriage. . They pay almost everything to the father of the son or their son-in-law. The Pir families in the marriage ceremony are closer to Kashmir Pandits, than their Muslim brothers in villages in paying costs.

After 1950's, sociology of marriage took another turn. In Srinagar or Towns in the valley professionals or match makers made a new dent. Doctors, engineers or other persons or men of social status either because of their wealth or profession or because of their earning status (corrupt officers) fetched more money for their clients. Such men of status could fetch anything in dowry—it touched a very high rate. One time, recently, each invitee accompanying the Barat, was not only served an expensive feast, but was given a sum of one thousand in cash as a gift or Nazrana to Baratis. Another time, after engagement, in the following winter, a fire pot was gifted to the groom filled in with bundles of hundred rupee notes as the cost of the charcoal alongwith a shapeless ball of gold on the currency notes as the cost of amber. Accordingly, during the last three decades marriages took place, not on the decision of the parents or that of boys and girls wish but on commercial basis. The consideration presently is not 'Kafoo' or the economic standards of the two families but the purchasing capacity of the girl's father and consequently, even the boys of the lowest class government employee of 4th class receives the dowry according to his standard. However, in the villages excluding privileged classes and middle ones

or highly educated, the parents of the commons still hold key to the marriages.

Kashmir is a caste ridden society. A Hanji boy shall marry within Hanji group or caste, Mir within Mir dynasty, Pir within Pir clan—there are no doubt erosions here and there. There are certain castes which enmass inter-marry. It constituted majority in villages. Men of status including doctors, engineers and the elite—elitism has no caste system—their caste is wealth and status.

A father of the present times in Kashmir faces a dilemma. He is embedded in the past. His value system regarding marriage is as old as he himself is. He still holds that he should have the power to decide his son's marriage. Modern son demands to enjoy the exclusive right of deciding his own spouse, yet influences on him are many. I, as father, embedded in the past believing that my marriage thirty six years back was simple and humble, would like tradition to be followed. Would my son's and daughters agree to it? The question to me is not how my sons and daughters like to be married but how I would be in a position to select my daughter-in-law? My father tells me that he and his father were ideologically poles assunder—so am I against my father. The generation gap persists since long. My children ideologically may be different. The point, however, is whether I have the right to choose my daughter-in-law? Considering that my son permits me to decide his marriage—how would I choose. Would I choose, according to the values prevailing when I was married or according to the new generally acceptable norms?

The selection of a daughter-in-law does not harass me but disturbs me. The reason is simple. Our society is undergoing value crisis. There are three types of girls around me. The first category is that of educated, fashionable, social and moving in the market places—such girls are hardly without a stigma. It does not mean that they are dishonest—hardly there might be one. The stigma is caused to them because our society has two negative elements. We easily commit at character assassination and secondly we interfere too much in the matters of others. So let me choose educated one for my educated son. Would such daughter-in-law be faithful to me, to my wife and to her husband? Surely not—not because she has not the sentiment for obedience but she does not want to loose her freedom. In retaining her freedom which is natural to all human beings, she can be only faithful to her husband and to her own parents and none else. The

second category of the girls both educated and uneducated around me belong to me by 'Kafoo' or to my own economic and social standards. Most of them either are not acceptable to my son or not acceptable to me or to my wife on the ground that in our social interaction we had jealousies or differences regarding their behavior towards us. The third category is the group of the girls who are domestic—such girls are mostly uneducated; some of them may be literate or partly educated. Such a girl as a daughter-in-law would, definitely, help me and my wife in old age. Would it not be inconvenient for my son to marry such a girl if he is to live in the dense city of Bombay or Calcutta or face the hush hush of New York and London? Who knows travels may be in the store of his luck.

There is prevailing theory that the girl who could fit to be a daughter-in-law, in a Muslim family like mine, should be highly exposed to Muslim morals and beliefs. Is there one to find around—none. Firstly, it is very difficult to find, if not ideal, at least a girl who could suit an educated Muslim middle class family from amongst the families upholding Islamic values. Secondly, even if I find one—it can be deceptive. Duplication is very common in our society—it has become part of our life. Thirdly, it is very difficult to understand a woman—even Freud confessed his inability to understand a woman through his investigations into the soul of a woman for thirty five years of his life. In my own humble way, I studied woman for the last thirty six years and found that she is self-centered and hypocrite—therefore, choice of a daughter-in-law, is more difficult. The problem with choosing a daughter-in-law does not lie in my incapacity in decision making but in the confusing social values of a transitional society. I am a rebel but embedded in the values of my past and am in direct confrontation with the realities of the present social life in Kashmir. My children as yet have not imbibed in them the values of our 'being' nor sought the values of the society they live in. In this quagmire my children and I must accept certain universal and permanent values, which are no doubt mundane and could help all of us. I would, therefore, definitely desire to maintain the universal value of marriage by neither purchasing my daughter-in-law nor selling out my son.

POLITICS IN FOLKLORE

Literature refers to the artistic writings having characteristic of being remembered. In the broadest sense it includes any type of writings on any subject—for example literature relating to medicine, engineering and so on. It is a body of artistic writings of a country or period that characterized by beauty of expression, form and by universality of intellectual and emotional appeal. It is made of a refined character. It is the cream of the language that a nation or a country speaks and inherits. According to Wittgenstein, "the totality of propositions is language" and language is the form of life. At the same time Wittgenstein believed that there must be some thought behind words. Language and its refined aspect is literature, and are necessitated for the continuity of culture. However, language and literature includes folklore as well. Previously folklore was not written down and not included in literature. Now it is being collected and enough research takes place in various fields of the folk literature. The word folklore was coined by the English antiquarian W.J. Thomas, in 1846 to denote the traditions, customs and superstitions of the uncultured classes in civilized nations. Presently even the third world countries are investigating into various facets of their folklore. The scope of folklore has expanded beyond customs, traditions and superstitions. It now includes popular arts and crafts, the material and intellectual culture of the peasantry, and economically lower classes. The result of the work of the English anthropologist, Sir Edward Taylor, Sir James Frazer, and others prove that no sharp boundaries can be drawn in practice between the field of folklore and that of social anthropology. Any field of literature including folklore, however, should include all aspects of human life—politics as well.

Kashmir in the past was either governed by the tyranny of a minority or by a king and inhabitants were afraid only of the world beyond. During

entire written history of Kashmir till the end of Dogras, people were, in most of the periods alienated from politics. Accordingly, emphasis on the other world was the main concern of religious preachers and reformers. Leadership remained with Reshis, Munis and Pirs. They usually felt that politics was the worst trade. In effect, Kashmir, both in literature and folklore projects politics as nothing but "Yeeravan-Naav" or anarchy. Phrases like, "Gech Karenav Seyasat" (Go and get yourself humiliated) or "Tamas Karekh Seyasat" (He got himself humiliated) are still in vogue. Professor Robert Dahl says, "Our definition says virtually nothing about human motives. It definitely does not imply that in every political system people are driven by powerful inner needs to rule others that leaders passionately want authority, or that politics is inherently a fierce struggle for power." Kashmiris like the Zuni Indians of the American Southwest, had a very strong sense that power seekers must not be given power. Sometimes the political behavior of Kashmiris in his history suggests that they behaved like Zuni Indians. Sometimes in his history it has been fierce struggle for power. In support of the first assertion we have Kashmir Shaivism, mysticism and Resuth (reshi-cult) and generally speaking (earlier) spiritual culture, which made Kashmiris shun politics. On the opposite, we find in history, clashes between the activists of one religion and the other, wicked rajas and Ranis, lack of character among officials, disruptive factors of debauchery and palace intrigues. We know of the Kings, who were puppets in the hands of powerful ministers or in different groups like Damras, Ekengaz and Lavanyas and others.

Whether people of Kashmir shunned politics or acted as power seekers, does not mean that they had no notions regarding politics or they did not react to the injustice caused to them by their rulers. Whenever they felt politics is value free they either protested or rebelled and when they could not do so they immortalized their feelings through folklore. Kashmiris have through their folklore denounced injustices or tyrannies caused to them from time to time.

Kashmiri folklore has as many as four fields namely proverbs, folk tales, folk songs and folk theatre. All of them are full of content on politics. We can examine each aspect.

Words in the context of Wittgenstein's philosophy are used as the materials of most of our speaking and writing. It is words which we most often utter and write, when we utter or write something, it is just foodstuffs

that we most often use as materials when we cook. According to Wittgenstein, a more significant aspect, for us, of the use of words has to do with grammar of the word in question, with the kind of linguistic context in which the word can and cannot occur. A Kashmiri speaks a word, phrase, euphemism and proverb like the members of any other social system. Kashmiri is believed to talk intelligently on most subjects and they have great aptitude for sarcasm, says W.R. Lawrence. However, words and sentences mean many things—some important, some unimportant and others just to carry meaning in social interaction. Kashmiri is many a time sarcastic regarding politics and at many other times subtle. Though most of the words, ideas have not been recorded yet some have been communicated to us through folklore. Kashmiri had and has a capacity to provide a fuller theory of politics. For example, the Kashmiri has enough knowledge regarding the statecraft. He is conscious that in case the citizen is burdened with tax, he would have no content—he says,

“Yele Baj Gav Tele Barkath Gey”

(When you levy tax, you loose abundance).

W.R. Lawrence says that Kashmiris believe that man has his own price. Mughals, Sikhs and Pathans had their own governors to administer and every governor was conferred nickname in Kashmir. It is a curious fact that the strong governors who were hard to people have been given the most complimentary nicknames. Regarding governor Punno the proverb says:

“Wazir Tsalih, Kashir Bali”

“When the Wazir goes, Kashmir will prosper”.

According to W.R. Lawrence, Maharaja Pratap Singh had done much to change and improve the position of his subjects. According to him his kindness to all classes in Kashmir had won him the affection of his people. One day, one of his subjects complained to him, regarding the fraud perpetrated to him by a goldsmith. The King instructed him to meet the former or contact him near the goldsmith's shop. At the appointed hour the King passed in front of the goldsmith's shop and on seeing the complainant, he simply called him to talk something into his ear. The shopkeeper was astonished to see his client in so much of privacy with the king. Later goldsmith returned his ornaments with reverence. This episode reveals that closeness to power is in the best interests of a person. The proverb thus

reveals that importance of it in the following phrase:

“Kenh mate Detam, Kenus Tel Netum”

(Do not bestow anything to me; only take me nearer to your ear).

In history, Kashmiri had very little freedom to enjoy. He was mostly ill clad, ill fed and ill treated. He was ill fed because, the land belonged to the king and when the Kashmiri cultivated the land he received very small share of his labour. That small share also could not be enjoyed by him as a matter of choice because cavalry was employed enforcing the villagers to plough and sow. The worst of it was that soldiers or Peydas (cavalry) came at the harvest time and share of the state was seized. Some of it was taken away by the cavalry as a booty. And as such there was very little grain left to tide the unfortunate peasants over the cruel winter, when snow was deep and temperature fell below zero (W.R. Lawrence). People in their history at many a time, did demand nothing except rice. So the proverb,

Bate bate, Peyada pate”

(Cry for rice and tyranny by cavalry).

Most of the revenue department officials were and are corrupt, unless one would bribe, nothing could be kept for the survival. Corruption was in vogue and still is with the revenue department, so the proverb like this was evolved;

‘Yed Dag Chae Bed Dag’

(Stomach ache is the worst pain)

‘Aessas Kota Chachu Ihya Draeo’

(Once you bribe, you receive kind word)

One more important proverb relating to bribery and corruption is found in Kashmiri word ‘Zej’. Zej is the kind of ant, in whose nature lies the fact that it sticks to a body and ordinarily is not removable. The officers or nominees of the revenue department did not only demand money but also something in kind like ‘Rosum’ a bribe paid in terms of rice. Accordingly, the word ‘Zej’ connotes the burden of the employees of the state on the subjects.

If we collect and select all words, phrases, sentences available in Kashmiri folklore to prove our contention that politics is an evil trade, we maybe able to publish a voluminous book and still the work will be incom-

plete. However, some specific words, sentences or phrases are given to readers to indicate the versatility of a Kashmiri to confer nicknames as well as the sentiment or reaction against what the government officials do for them from time to time.

1. Backbiting King (Puth Paadshahis Gabeth)
2. Looting King by digging pond underground (Tel Tel Talao Khan Padshahis Looth Karun)
3. Oh God save from ruler and Hakeem (Hakeemas Te Hakimas No Najat)
4. Turbans are not costly, courtiers are important, (Dastaran Chh Moul, Darbaran Chue Moul)
5. To live with the inexperienced is as good as to start quarrel with the people (Khamas Seeth Gar Karun Te amas Seeth Har Karen)
6. Had headman not been limited (in powers) he would raise the whole village to ruins in a single day (Mukadamas Ne Phokdam Asihae, Gamp Kasihai Shamas Tam)
7. One must have courage to converse in Persian with a Pathan. (Pathan Deshat Gache Fharsi Phorun)
8. Deaf heard the news of the death of Badshah after twelve years (Zer Booz Bahi Vehar Badshah Moud)
9. Badri Nath's unauthorized seal (Badri Nathan Adre Mohar)
10. Pratap Singh's Turban. (Pratap Singhun Dastar)
11. Salam Shah's boon. (Salam Shahun Tsooch)
12. Sher Singh's famine (Sher Singhun Drag)
13. Azim Khan's burden. (Azim Khanin Chet)
14. Settlement of Lawrence (Lawrence Sabun Bundbasat)

The next field of folklore involves itself to folk tales. These folk tales are nothing but those popular stories which in Kashmir, people use to speak and read out to the children or to old people. Kashmiri folklore exhibits a wide range of topics touching every aspect of traditional life including religion, secular myths, historical legends, folk science in stars, plants and animals. Much of it is art, expressing the lore of telling stories, asking riddles and playing games. Though the art of story telling in Kashmir

been replaced by Radio and TV, yet there are some common people who still like to hear these stories. Kashmiri folk tales were first collected by an English man in 1887 whose name was J.H Noels. Lately Mr. Nooruddin Roshan, Prof. Sham Lal Sadhu had some collections published. Prof. Sadhu's collection is in English language. The Academy of Art, Culture and Languages Srinagar published many books so far, first book was compiled by Mr. Akthar Mohiuddin and second by Poshkar Bhan. Late Tak Zainagiri also edited two books on folk tales. If we examine only published folk tales which is a fraction of its totality, we find in them tales invariably relating to kings, queens, princesses, princes, ministers and sons of Wazirs or ministers etc. In pre-partition politics of Indian sub-continent, only kings and queens determined the fate of the people—they governed and nobody controlled their actions and decisions. These tales provide a sentiment of the people as to how kings should have ruled. There are also tales which give enough sentiments of the people protesting against the tyrannies perpetrated by Kings who were not kind to their subjects. These tales are both a treatise on statecraft and a protest against tyrant and misrule. Some of the examples are cited to elaborate the theory.

Since Kashmir was colonized by Kashyapa, politics in Kashmir was born and struggle for power was initiated. Sometimes Reshis, Munis and Pirs disdained it but at other times struggle for power was intense. During Hindu period, a King tried to do good to people but his all attempts were frustrated by the overall conditions in the country. Evils of drinking and womanization prevailed. The astrologers of the court warned the King about the wrath from God on the people in the form of rains which in their opinion would cause all people to turn mad. The expected rain fell and all people turned insane. The King and his courtiers saved themselves from the rains by storing water for themselves. The people, however, in their insanity did not abide by the orders of the King and the courtiers simply were rendered berserk for they had no decision to make and if they ever commanded, there was no obedience. It was a lawless society. In frustration the King and courtiers decided to drink the same maddening water. Insanity or madness in Kashmiri language means 'Meth' and as such 'Meth Aab' as a phrase is still treated and associated with the concept of anarchy in modern political science. Kashmiri has experienced anarchy many a time in history.

Kashmir has experience of administration, bureaucracy and so on from earlier time to the present. The people were conscious to hold a government post in ancient times and today also they desire to seek one. Actually we have today a fierce competition. In 'Folk tales from Kashmir' authored by Prof. Shyam Lal Sadhu, we find a story relating to administrative importance. A Kashmiri contacts the king in petition to allow him to count the ripples in the Dal Lake, free of cost for personal knowledge. The man stood by the side of the Dal Lake to count ripples; the boats were not permitted by him to move because it disturbed them. Normally, Boatmen could not keep themselves away from their normal trade—they accordingly bribed the ripple counting officer. Two assertions can be made out of it. Firstly, the Kashmiri mind can conceive anything and secondly institution of corruption is very old with the society. Further it visualizes the theory that to be powerful means to be in government service.

Now let me present to you two folk tales. One tale is behind the phrase 'Ala Shahir' and second 'Tele-Van-Shahir'.

Through the folklore, it is communicated to us that once upon a time, a citizen in the valley decided to enter the state capital Srinagar. On his entry he had to cross octroi posts. On the first, second and third posts, he had to pay eleven pumpkins as octroi, though he had carried only ten with him. Instead of going home, dejected, he settled on the premises of a cemetery. Those who brought dead bodies to bury in the cemetery, he would charge them some fee. He earned enough money through the trade. One day a cousin of the King was to be buried and he charged his kins more than he usually demanded from other people. King, accordingly, heard about it. He ordered his Prime Minister to present the cemetery watchman before him. On the enquiry, the citizen conveyed to the King that if he had to pay eleven pumpkins as octroi for ten what harm was to demand money for the kins of the deceased. The King was ashamed of it.

Another tale relates to a citizen who moved for business to another city on the back of his mare. On the way he stopped for the night with a person who possessed an ass and had an oil mill i.e. (*Tele Wein*). Both the mare and ass were kept near each other in the stable. During the night the mare delivered a mule. In the morning the mule stayed back with the ass and when the case was taken to the judge or Qazi, he gave the mule to the owner of the ass. Both the tales relate to the injustices caused to the society in general. More injustices caused to the people—more we call it 'Ala Shahir'.

and 'Telewein Shahir'.

We have enough folk tales which provide us enough material regarding politics in the past—and guidance for the present and future. We have enough examples when the Divisional Commissioner would say that he would not help if the Patwari could not. How would Kashmiris forget that a Gujjar prayed that the Chief Conservator should become forest guard because he had experience and notion that forest guard was a powerful officer. A Kashmiri is not likely to forget Raja Sanya Dutt's foolishness to cut his wife's nose because she fell as alleged by him, in love with a mirror. Nor is he likely to forget his folly, to ask his Prime Minister to get a fairy from heaven. It is possible for the Kashmiris to forget such Kings whom he symbolizes today as 'Ahed Razas'? There are hundreds of the tales which can give precisely a political theory and political thought of the people of Kashmir from earlier times to the present.

A folk song, another aspect of folk lore, means primitive, spontaneous music that erupts from folk. It is known in German language as "*Volkslied*". It is a word which stands for a very definite fact in the realm of music. Folk songs in Kashmir represent the sentiment of the people, their material and spiritual attainments and poetic or musical talents. It is not surprising that women of Kashmir excel men in composing folk songs which are spontaneous. "The imagination of the Kashmiri has given some fine poetry to the world, which, however, has never been fully appreciated for lack of presentation in suitable form," says GMD Sufi. Kashmir has accordingly produced a wealth of folk songs. Late Ali Mohd Lone is of the opinion that Kashmiri folk lores include Ruff, Nenda Beith, Wanwun, Ladi Shah, manzil Beith, Shoer Beith, Chakir Te Vatsun etc. Folk songs were collected by the Academy of Art, Culture and languages Srinagar and edited by Moti Lal Saqi in five volumes in 1967-68. Kashmiri language has a great wealth of these songs and it is not simple a task to collect all.

Kashmir remained under Kingship most of the periods before 1947. Kingship depended on the whims of an individual. If the person (King) was good in nature, he used to do justice to people otherwise tyranny prevailed. During these periods the people of Kashmir, alienated from politics, remained according to Bannerji "Dum driven cattle". Ali Mohd Lone while defining the contents of folk songs says that these songs provide sorrows, pathos, bliss and happiness, sports, satire, sarcasm, imaginations and mystique of the folk. To me it includes the sentiments of the people regard-

ing politics. Politics binds all in one chain. The content of these folk songs represent alienation, frustrations, corruptions, prejudices, bigotry, terrorism, favouritism, exploitations—all relating to politics. In such songs sentiment is pure because the composer of the songs has no bias nor has he anything to gain. His is a natural reaction. One of the most important fields in folksongs is 'Ladi Shah' which represents politics in its subtle form. Late Abdul Ahad Azad regards Ladi Shah as the representative of all historical events, natural calamities, including floods, hailstorms, severe winters, earthquakes, death and birth and exploitation of Pirs and Brahmins and all tyrannies perpetrated by the governments. The natural calamities had deep political influences on the people of the state. Floods, hailstorms, severe winters, famines, choleras, earthquakes and religion had the highest impact on the Kashmiri life and character. These calamities and drunkenness of our rulers in their power moulded the character of the entire population in Kashmir. Ladi Shah possibly rose as a reaction to the tyrannies of the Kings who carelessly ruled the people. These folk songs remained confined to 'Khal' i.e. open store house for paddy. Begging is an unnatural profession but Ladi Shah as an institution tried to make it natural. A Ladi Shah would sing for begging. It is a spontaneous poetry and the Ladi Shah composes some kind of poetry whether he begs in 'Khal' or in the compound of a house.

Usually, Ladi Shah (a form of folk songs) has touched topics like salt, rice paucity (nune and Bate Drag) and floods (Sehlab) famines, plague and cholera and so on. At the same time, Ladi Shah, has evaluated and assessed politics. Politics so discussed in such spontaneous and attempted verses, is by and large an individual reaction to politics. In yet another folk song form namely 'Wane Wun' politics is dealt with subtlety. Their form and style is unique in the sense that it is sung by women. It is musical and attractive. Women used to sing them for their leaders. The folk song namely 'Wane Wun' pertaining to politics is waning though on marriage ceremonies it still persists.

Kashmiri folk stage (Bande Pather) a sheer art, expressing one self on the stage has faded away considerably. It is confined to 'Bhagat Theatre' performance only and that too within the four walls of Radio Kashmir or Doordarshan. It was a performance by actors on the stage, who posed riddles and played games—it was the joy of music and the song but a satire on politics—it was reflecting either Ahed Raza symbolic of foolish ruler or

Laliditya and Zainul Aabidin symbolizing wise and benevolent rule. Stage drama in Kashmir known as 'Pather' was usually enacted in a 'Bande Jeshan'. Band in Kashmir was a group of musicians—having the sole object of earning livelihood through stage entertainment. However, the ruler, whether real or nominal, or administrators including white collar criminals or others, who divulge in politics, remained interesting themes for such actors of 'Bande Pather'. This theatre of Bande Jeshan in Kashmir has faded and possibly will never recover.

KASHMIRI—A HOUSEHOLD LANGUAGEI

In modern age of science of communication, a language is criss crossed by other languages in one or the other form. May be that the competition amongst languages is just the survival of the fittest in the biological sense as each language tries to live to the tune and temper of the time. Thus each language in its competition, at least in the present day world, is influenced by other languages considerably. Today, in any language many words of other languages are borrowed unconsciously or as a matter of necessity. In Kashmiri language hundreds and thousands of words at present are spoken which are borrowed from either English Urdu or Hindi..... Does it mean that the fittest language shall survive and others shall be defaced or perish? The answer may be 'Yes' or 'No' but the fact remains that the Kashmiri as language has survived over the last five thousand years of its history by absorbing in it any kind of infiltration or influence from any other sister language. Present day world is a departure from the past. Previously, either in ancient or medieval periods, such languages flourished which from household position were raised to the status of an official language. Every language raised to the status of an official position enjoys many privileges. The business of the court or the government is not only run through the official language but it is also picked up as the language of priests, elite and all those who matter in a social fabric. Even the village headman enjoys the right of using official language and feels gratified. Sanskrit, language as an official language in ancient Kashmir, was treated as language of the gods and the ruler or a king who did not know this language was considered a lowbrow or apabhramsa. Unfortunately Kashmiri language could never be raised to the status of an official language, both due to the apathy of the rulers and the negligence of the common people.

Any language may emerge as a distinct language territorially. It may be spoken or written or may be an admixture of words from many languages. Kashmiri cannot be exception to the general rules of making a language. Kashmiri, as W. Lawrence would assert, is a polyglot of different language vocabularies. According to him any hundred words in Kashmiri, 25 were Sanskrit, 40 Persian, 15 Hindustani and 10 Arabic. After hundred years of his estimate, I calculate it and put it out of hundred as:

Kashmiri language presently consists of 60% Urdu, Persian 10%, English 25% and Hindi 5%. This assertion is substantiated by our daily spoken Kashmiri, whether the person speaking the language is educated, literate or illiterate. It proves that the highest influence of a language over another tongue is caused by an official language. For the past nearly ninety years Urdu has been official language in the state of J&K. Such kind of transformation of a language by an official language is normal in the life of any language. Thus the relationship between the official language and the household language is the relationship of master and the slave mentality. In ancient Kashmir, Sanskrit as official language had highest influence over other local dialects. During medieval period, according to Lawrence and others Persian was the official language. Modern period has witnessed the hegemony of Urdu and thus Urdu reins the roost. Let us examine.

In ancient Kashmir Sanskrit was the official language and it is correctly asserted that Kashmir was the 'High School' of Sanskrit learning. Grierson also confirms that for 'upwards of two thousand years Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this small valley have issued masterpieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy'. It is enough evidence to construct that Sanskrit was an official language but not the language of the people. Kalhanas Rajtarangni substantiates this assertion. Rajtarangni (Books V & VII, Verses 398 and 441-443) quotes some original Kashmiri words like, 'Rangas Helu Dyun' which according to M.A Stein characterizes boorishness of the Domba, and proves that the phrase belonged to the Kashmiri spoken language. Further, according to Stein Kalhana uses many a time, vernacular or language in vogue, instead of the official Sanskrit. There are many proverbs, in addition to words used by Kalhana to indicate the difference between the vernacular and the official language Sanskrit. Rajtarangni is composed in official language Sanskrit and as such the vernacular words and phrases used in it are then extant specimen of Kashmiri in it. Though sometimes Kalhana translates them

into Sanskrit, yet we know their meaning or usage even at present. For example the verse (Book V: Verse 401) he uses 'As snow dissolves snow, too, one sin the other', might according to Stein mean the Kashmiri proverb in Kalhana's mind, 'Nov shin chu gaalaan pranis shinus'. The proverb as used by the Kalhan is not the social theory per se, but fits with parasitic and the king of vile character, otherwise commission of one sin will not dissolve the other sin. Kalhana uses or translates this proverb to show the Sanskrit language; the language of gods or the laity and the elite is different than the common man's spoken words. Thus, during ancient Kashmir, the language spoken by the society was Kashmiri, whatever its form and content.

After the dawn of Islam in the valley, Sanskrit which remained in vogue for nearly four thousand and four hundred years in Kashmir lost its field in favour of Persian. Stein asserts that Islam made its way into Kashmir, not by forcible conquest but by gradual conversion for which the influx of foreign adventurers both from south and central Asia had prepared ground. The adoption of Islam by the common man in the valley began at the close of Hindu rule and became an accomplished fact during the later half of the fourteenth century. The earliest contact of Kashmir with Sindh, influx of Faqirs and Darveshes to the valley, to the conversion of Rinchin to Islam, preaching of Shah-e-hamdan, and other Sayeds, Reshi movement of Nunda Reshi and Reshian Kashmir, Dastagir Sahib and his teachings, Mukhdoom Sahib and his missionary zeal entirely revolutionized the valley and the people converted paving a way for a new culture. The new culture or Muslim culture in Kashmir gradually developed blending old and the new. However, this conversion and culture, was the consequence of the missionary zeal of the Persian—i.e. Islam reached the valley through Iran and central Asia. The Sanskrit language withered away giving place to Persian language. The Persian language became the official language without recognizing the household language, and had domino effect between the rulers and the ruled. When Rinchin captured the throne of Kashmir in 1320 AD and converted to be known as Sadrudin, he in his title to the son of Ramachandra used the words 'Ji Dost'. According to Malik Haider Chadura 'Ji' means master as a mark of respect and 'dost' means friend in Persian language. It therefore means in Persian as 'esteemed friend'. Thus, the process of Persianization in Kashmir started. It continued uptill Maharaja Hari Singh's ascendancy to the throne of Kashmir. Since the time Rinchin or Sadrudin Shah, ascendancy or hegemony of Persian language continued

but as in ancient Kashmir so in medieval period Kashmiri remained the spoken language of the masses only. It could not assert itself as an official language due to the orientation of Persian language and culture. During the Sultanate period especially during the rule of Zainulaabidin, later Chaks, the Persian language received enough patronage at the hands of the Kashmir rulers. Later any lapses in the promotion of Persian language were extirpated by the Mughals. The Afghans had no need to shatter the status of Persian language as official language because they needed it as much as the Mughals. However, Sikh rule over Kashmir lasted for a brief span of period during which the rulers at Lahore were too busy to pay attention to the affairs in the far off provinces of their country. Secondly on the formation of Ranjit Singh's kingdom in the Punjab, Persian had become the official language of its court, though Ranjit Singh himself was not acquainted with it. Persian language, as an official language, thus descended down to Dogra rulers as the last vestige of the Muslim rule. It is in the context of the Persian language and cultural influence of Iran that Kashmir was named as 'Irani-Sagir' for a long time.

The dawn of Dogra rule in Kashmir witnessed some kind of decline in Persian in its official status. Though Persian continued during the reigns of Maharaja Gulab Singh and Ranbir Singh but its decline started with Maharaja Pratap Singh who recognized Urdu as an official language. Further Persian saw its total neglect at the official level during the reign of Maharaja Hari Singh Jee. A process of Sanskritization was initiated by the same ruler. The word like Miyan was discarded and was replaced by Maharaj, Kumar or Shri Yuvraj and so on. The name of the palace at Jammu was replaced as Gulab Bhavan. The old Shergarhi in Srinagar was renamed as Parmukh. The Prime Minister was called Pradhan Amatiya and the council of ministers as Amitya Mandal. According to GMD Sufi, the swearing in of high state functionaries during the time was done through a Sanskrit formula. During the time of Maharaja Hari Singh, the language problem took a serious turn. It was however, solved by introducing simple Urdu as the medium of instruction for children in schools. They were given option of adopting the Devnagiri or Persian script. Hindustani was decided to be the link between various regions of the state. The controversy, whether Hindustani be written in Persian or Devnagiri, even then persisted. It was in context to this controversy that capt R.G Wreford, the author of the Census of India 1947, remarked:

"It is only necessary here to say that the figures for Hindustani are inflated as the result of the Urdu-Hindi controversy. Propaganda was carried on during the census by the adherents of both the parties to the dispute with the result that many Hindus gave Hindi as their mother tongue and many Muslims gave Urdu, quite contrary to the facts in the great majority cases. The dispute is largely political and so to keep politics out of the census, it was decided to lump Hindi and Urdu together as Hindustani."

The Maharaja Hari Singh's reign witnessed as early as the beginning of thirties, an uprising under the leadership of the Muslim conference and later under the banner of the All J&K National conference the slogans to foster Urdu as an official language. When the document of 'Naya Kashmir' was drafted it recognized Urdu as an official language and with Persian script. However, the document under section 48, dealt with the state languages and section 37 added that it be the language of courts. Later, after accession of the State of J&K to India the constitution of J&K, a historical and political necessity, recognized Urdu as an official language. It states that the official language to be Urdu but the English language shall unless the legislature by law otherwise provides shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the state. Thus during last fifty years Urdu language is not only the official but has become the language of the courts, schools, laity, and the elite. It has by now touched the common man by treating the Urdu as the language of the Musalman.

The evaluation of the official languages, in its historical perspective reveal that Kashmiris have accepted voluntarily and sometimes rejected unwittingly the domination of a foreign language. However, when they accepted Sanskrit, the language of gods in ancient Kashmir as their official language they made themselves so much proficient in it that Kashmir was recognized as the high school of Sanskrit learning. In medieval period of our history we know that Kashmiris excelled themselves in Persian language when it was adopted as an official language of the state. It produced eminent Persian scholars and poets who are well known till date. The time Urdu became the choice for the official language; we produced most of the literature in the same language. Thus, since 1947 most of the official or non-official documents or the books on history, religion, and philosophy and so on were published in Urdu. We have to recognize that Kashmiris could not assert, for more than five thousand years, to get Kashmiri acceptable as an official language. It might be true that its inherent contra-

diction of script before 1947 might have been responsible for its status as an official language. Presently, its adoption as an official language in future is too bleak to be accepted.

Kashmiri language, thus during last five thousand years and more has remained a language of the household. It enriched itself till 1947 without state patronage. During last six decades, Kashmiri became a language of a civilized people—poetry prose, drama, short story, novel, criticism and updating of folk lore—all that make a language civilized and rich. It was the consequence of just gesture of a government, though the bureaucratic lobby remained always against it. Had the patronage been unblemished during last five decades, a great leap towards the enrichment of the language could have been made. However, the credit of preserving the Kashmiri language and its enrichment goes to the peasantry and the common masses in the vale of Kashmir—its household status, in absence of an official position, is the very soul of it.

TREATY OF AMRITSAR - A SALE DEED

Having had the opportunity to study the series of articles published in Kashmir Times regarding the Treaty or sale Deed of Bai-nama Amritsar of March 1846, by the historians, Dr. Mohd Ishaq Khan, Dr. Abdul Ahad and the journalist, Mr. B.P Sharma, I as a student of Political science could discern the politics in the history of the controversy over the Treaty. The fact that there is politics behind history and history behind politics, I thought to enter into the controversy.

Dr. Abdul Ahad's sweeping generalization that Kashmir was never sold to Maharaja Gulab Singh is a hypothesis which he tried to be substantiated and proved by him on certain grounds. Firstly, the writer questions the nomenclature of the Treaty. He catches the title "Treaty of Amritsar" and discards the title "Bai-nama" Amritsar. Secondly, the word transfer in the treaty is emphasized in lieu of the services of Gulab Singh or for his pro-British leanings. Further he tries to prove that British entered the agreement to weaken the Sikh Kingdom. In addition he tries to explain that dividing Muslims, Sikhs, Dogras, the British wanted to subvert and substantially check the Russian expansion in Central Asia which had posed a great threat to their commerce, trade and politics in the region. They wanted to do this behind the scene without directly coming into conflict with Russians. Lastly, Kashmir, according to Dr. Abdul Ahad, was part of Sikh State of Lahore State and victory over them by the British and the failure of Maharaja of Lahore to pay an indemnity of Rs One Crore, Maharaja Gulab Singh came forward to offer 75 Lakhs as an indemnity. Mr B.P Sharma, the journalist agrees with Dr. Abdul Ahad but contends that the same theory he had advocated as early as April 1937. According to him also, the Treaty of Amritsar could not be categorized as the 'sale' of Kashmir to Gulab Singh. However, Mr. Sharma, rejected Dr. Abdul Ahad's last argument that Ma-

haraja Gulab Singh did not pay the indemnity in lump sum by publishing a letter of Mr. C. Grey who found a receipt for Rs 75 Lakhs in the record office.

Dr. Mohd Ishaq Khan, the historian, joined the controversy immediately. One would like to agree with him that British had no legal or moral right in transferring the hereditary and proprietary right of Kashmiris in the land to Gulab Singh and his "heir male" in perpetuity. It was that imperialist game that not only disintegrated State of Jammu and Kashmir but even whole of the sub-continent. It is true that Gulab Singh had no right to negotiate a settlement on the future of Kashmir. Dr. Ishaq is also right in asserting that the British and Gulab Singh had no moral ground in determining the fate of Kashmir or Kashmiris for a petty sum of Rs 75 lakhs in Nanakshahi. In history the popular view should not be given priority. As a matter of fact Dr. Abdul Ahad's five points are only jargon—they do not in any way substantiate his view point because he does not understand politics behind the history, its facts and interpretations. One would not contest the importance of fact and interpretation in history but even a fact and interpretation in history can be politics. It is strange on the part of historian to reduce the science of history as value free—without the value judgment history would be worthless. It is pertinent to recall that D. Chesnokov held, "in the history of society, from slavery to the present day, production relations in all countries have had a class character or have been accompanied by class distinctions. Throughout history, therefore, the social superstructure has always been of a political nature, with its own political basis."

It would be suggestive for the historian like Dr. Abdul Ahad to note that in the substantive proof for the Treaty of Amritsar, neither he nor any other historian since 1846, may it be Hassan Khuihami or GMD Sufi or any other European visitor, has more to say than what is provided to us before 1946. Dr. Abdul Ahad or Mr. B.P Sharma could not have anything conspicuous in the official or non-official sources which could be treated authentic. Their only emphasis is on the nomenclature of the Treaty. Therefore, it becomes imperative on me to delineate on the title itself.

Encyclopedia Britannica is helpful to define or explain the terms like "Treaty" or "Sale Deed" (Bai-nama in Urdu or Persian) for us, which I hope will support the contention of Dr. Mohd Ishaq Khan. According to this definition and explanation a Treaty is an instrument binding two or

more States under international law. The word Treaty is derived, through the French 'traite' from the Latin 'tractatus' the term which from the end of the 17th century began to be used in diplomacy instead of the other technical terms like 'convention publica' and 'foedus' (alliance). According to modern diplomatic usage the term Treaty is confined to the more important agreements and those of lesser or subordinate importance have been called conventions, agreements, arrangements, protocols and acts, but all these conform to the definition of a treaty given above. The Treaty of Amritsar took place in the nineteenth century when in modern diplomatic usage the term treaty is confined to the more important agreements. The Treaty of Amritsar, according to this definition, is not an agreement because it is entered into two binding parties, but not between two binding states, as stipulated under international law. International law does not recognize a Treaty in which an individual is a party. In the context of international law, therefore, the Treaty of Amritsar, which is an agreement between an individual and a company, both non-states cannot be a Treaty at all.

A sale deed, on the other hand as recognized under law, both national and international, is an agreement or a contract in writing, sealed and party intended to benefit. Writing, sealing and delivery are all essential to a deed. Delivery, in sale deed, is held to be complete even without handing over of the deed—however, it is sufficient if the act of sealing were accompanied by words, acts signifying that the deed was intended to be binding, and delivery to a third person for the use of the party benefited will be sufficient. Any sale is affected only through a deed or through the law of contract. Pothier entitles his classical treatise on the subject, "trait du contract de vente". But a completed contract of a sale is something more. It is a contract plus a transfer of property. By an agreement to sell an "ius in personam" is created, by a sale of "ius in rem" is transferred. The essence of a sale is the transfer of property for a price, express implied the transaction is of the nature of gift.

Thus with regrets to Dr. Abdul Ahad and Mr. B.P Sharma, the Treaty of Amritsar is a sale deed and not a Treaty. It is a sale deed or Bai-nama by virtue of the fact that the Company transferred the property to Maharaja Gulab Singh in lieu of Rs 75 Lakhs in lump sum, the receipt found by Mr. C. Grey and "ius in personam" is created by a sale of "ius in rem" is transferred. The essence of Amritsar Treaty is transfer of Jammu and Kashmir

State along with Kashmiris (property) transferred to Gulab Singh for a price of Rs 75 Lakhs.

The Treaty of Amritsar inherits all characteristics of a sale deed and it is by all canons of law of contract a sale deed. No imperialist worth the name, that too a colonial power like England, would entitle such an agreement or any other instrument of mutuality as a sale deed. This is politics of imperialism behind the history of Treaty of Amritsar. There have been worst sales of peoples in the world by these imperialists since 1846, in the garb of treaties. The nationalist movement leadership in Kashmir had understood the politics behind the treaty and as such called it Bai-nama. I would, therefore, suggest to Dr. Abdul Ahad not to sell our history to his position.

SHEIKH ABDULLAH—THE LAST PHASE

If the new rulers of the state in 1947, received a legacy of Kashmir sociology of politics, administrative set up and some kinds of constitutional framework they also carried over from their immediate past, too much of trust in the congress leadership, particularly in Gandhiji and Pt. Nehru. However, this unqualified trust by Kashmir leadership in the Central Leadership soon reflected suspicion, resulting into many fissures in the centre-state relationship. The conflict discerned during the years 1947-51, were tried to be bridged by Delhi Agreement entered into by Sheikh Abdullah and Pt. Nehru in 1952. It tried to resolve the questions of citizenship, the appointment of the head of the state, issues involving state and national flags, president's power to reprieve and commute death sentences, fundamental rights as applicable to J&K and Supreme Courts original jurisdiction in respect of disputes mentioned in article 131 of the Indian Constitution! However, Delhi agreement¹ could not remove the suspicions of the Kashmir leadership, in particular the Sheikh and his loyalists.

Thus Kashmir politics entered into a politics of centre-State relations in its theoretical framework as early as 1951. In its operative parts, it was a politics of confrontation between the National Conference headed by Sheikh and the Congress Leadership at the centre. The suspicions grew on both sides. Analyzing the position Balraj Puri speaks, "The suspicions about the intention of the government of India regarding general merger of the state into the Indian Union, expressed by Abdullah, before his arrest in 1953, were thus gradually confirmed"². The merger proposals were not only resisted by the Sheikh and his loyalists but even Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad declared that article 370 which governed state's relations with the centre, would be abrogated, "on his dead body". Assuredly, Bakshi Sahib, like the Sheikh refused to go beyond certain limits. During the Sheikh era in the

post accession years, Kashmir's politics of defending article 370, particularly after 1950, actually culminated into what we describe today as the politics of centre-state relations.

After the incarceration of the Sheikh in 1953, his long internment under professed democracy, release and re-arrest many times, resulted finally in Indira-Sheikh Accord in 1975. The Sheikh was in power again but during the period 1953-75, politics of Plebiscite played a vital role in trying to redefine the constitutional boundaries which had been eroded during the periods. Consequently Mrs. Indira Gandhi wrote to Sheikh, "I am aware of your views on the centre-state relationship in respect of the state of J&K, I have already explained to you that the clock cannot be put back and we have to take note of the realities of the situation."³ The agreed conclusion under the accord still showed many fissures which were likely to initiate political ramblings in future. Assuredly, after hardly two years of power, the support of the Congress majority in the legislature was withdrawn and the state was placed under governor's rule. However, elections in June 1977, gave the Sheikh a thumping majority in the Assembly. Thus the National Conference regained power under peoples mandate and it started governing, yet the issues involved centre-state relationship could not abate instead they were aggravated. Inder Malhotra commenting on it wrote,

"In fairness, it must be added that the strife between the Chief Minister of so sensitive a State as Kashmir and New Delhi has not always been one way affair. If the Sheikh has often behaved in a wholly unacceptable manner and severely tested the Centre's patience, he too has been offered some provocation by the Congress (I). On one famous occasion, during a whirlwind tour of J&K, Mrs. Gandhi not only attacked the Sheikh vehemently but allowed herself to declare that without the Centre's tolerance and help, his government could not last even for half an hour."⁴

Since the Sheikh's assumption of office, the Centre-State relations enjoyed a status quo because of Janata regime at the Centre and later with congress (I) in power it was recognized as love-hate relationship. It was asserted that, 'overall, it continues to be love-hate relationship between the National Conference and the Congress (I)—in the state and at the centre. Each needs the other, yet each never misses an opportunity to snipe at the other.'⁵ So, hardly within the first year of Congress (I) rule at the centre after Janata fall, Sheikh-Indira started sniping at each other. When it came

to its blatant manifestations it resulted into the politics of Resettlement Bill.

The belief that the politics of resettlement Bill was only a syndrome of what is called the articulation of the Sheikh's political frustration in various ways, is not worth consideration, for he could do even without politics of the Bill. For instance, some argued that the political personality of the Sheikh had some disadvantageous features—he had lost in every confrontation that he initiated. To quote, "One of the reasons for his emerging as a looser is his authoritarian personality. His confrontation with Mr. Mohd Ali Jinnah lost for him the accession to Pakistan. Further his confrontation with the Maharaja lost him the independent Kashmir. Consequential upon his confrontation with Pt. Nehru before 1953, he lost the internal autonomy for Kashmir.⁶ Accordingly, when he had recaptured power at the fag end of his life he had developed into a personality which was by itself complex. He was what both national and international compulsions moulded him. However, he was destined to play the politics that he had mastered since 1931. The same was depicted by the "Times of India" cartoon with the caption.

"They will forget I am a lion! Its time I went out and scared them a bit".⁷

The cartoonist meant to satire, tried to explain the controversy over the resettlement Bill. The fact, however, remained that the Sheikh or the National Conference always tried to resist what was called encroachment over the State constitutional demarcations. About Kashmir he had many dreams and his, "emphasis on Kashmir being an entity separate from both India and Pakistan was unmistakable. In later years the concept of the Kashmiris being a quom (nation) became virtually litany in the Sheikh's speeches which would be punctured frequently with the slogan: "yah Mulak Hamara hai: Iska Faisala Ham Karengay" (this is our country and its future shall be decided by us).⁸ This concept of nationhood developed with him during his age—the political failures and glories coupled with his latest thought of cultural identification made him play a role during the last years of his life as important as before. Mostly, however, he had the compulsions of the political realities that his thoughts were only converted into platonic idealism. But even at the last juncture he went out many times and scared them a bit but suffered a lot. This germinated the controversy over Resettlement Bill.

The politics of identification, as the Sheikh conceived in the post 1975, had been initiated by him as early as 1952. Such politics manifested itself in his speeches both at Ganderbal and Ranbirsinghpura during 1952-53. This crisis which is usually called crisis in Centre-State relationship was direct consequence of the instrument of accession. Accession had taken place in hurry and under duress, without giving due cognizance to the relationship—it was motivated by the consideration whether Kashmir accedes to India or Pakistan. Accordingly, in actual operatives many problems arose laying strains on the subjects of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. The result was Delhi Agreement, entered into by the Sheikh and Pt. Nehru as the Prime Ministers of Kashmir and India. The Delhi agreement visualized the following:

*'It was agreed that special provisions should be made in the laws governing citizenship to provide for the return of those permanent, residents of J&K State who went to Pakistan in connection with the disturbances of 1947 or fear of them. If they return they should be entitled to the rights and privileges and obligations of citizenship.'*⁹

In pursuance of this agreement, the constitution of J&K which was passed after the Sheikh's removal in 1953, provided a full part, dealing and dedicating itself to the definition and construction of references to State Subjects in then existing laws. It further envisaged special provisions for Bills relating to permanent residents. Thus it declared every person who was or is deemed to be a citizen of India under the provisions of the Constitution of India to be permanent resident of the State, if on the fourteenth day of May 1954.

- (a). he was a State-Subject of Class I & II; or
- (b). having lawfully acquired immovable property in the state, he had been ordinarily resident in the state for not less than ten years prior to that date.¹⁰

The provisions relating to the State Subjects further delineated that any person who before the forth day of May, 1954, was a state Subject of Class I or II and who having migrated after the first day of March 1947, to the territory now included in Pakistan, returned to the state under a permit or for resettlement in the state or for permanent return issued by or under the authority of any Law made by the State legislature shall on such return be a permanent resident of the State.¹¹

Construction of reference to state subjects, in then existing laws in terms of "Hereditary State Subjects" or to state-subjects of class I, II & III were constructed to be a permanent residents as defined by the Constitution.¹² At the same time the constitution empowered the State Legislature the power to make any law dealing the classes of persons who were or could be the permanent residents of the State.¹³ Part III further empowered the State Legislature to pass any law under Section 9, make provisions for any of the following matters relating to permanent residents:

- (a) Defining or altering the definition of the classes of persons, who are, or shall be, permanent residents of the state;
- (b) Conferring on permanent residents any special rights or privileges;
- (c) Regulating or modifying any special rights or privileges enjoyed by permanent residents.

Finally, Section 10, in part III of the Constitution declared that Permanent residents of the State shall be entitled to all the rights guaranteed to them under the Constitution.¹⁴

To make the Delhi agreement operative and further delimit the constitutional boundaries between the Centre and the State of J&K from 1952 onwards many ruptures developed and much reconciliation took place. However, the first rupture known as the conspiracy of August 1953, bounded by the cry of Bakshi that Article 370 would be eroded on his dead body, played the course of politics of centre-State relations. Though the legal position favoured the accession yet the mistake of having committed to it without defining the relations gave rise to the politics of Constitutional relationship. However, it was forgotten, in due course of time, by virtue of power struggle initiated in 1953. The basic cause for the initiation of Centre-State politics was the Praja Parishad agitation in Jammu which according to Balraj Puri articulated regional discontent in the slogan of what is called 'Full Accession'.¹⁵ To the Kashmir leadership it was not the articulation of regional discontent but a deliberate action on the part of Indian governing elite, to compel Kashmiris to submit to full accession. Consequently, the Kashmir leadership drifted from their stand as they became apprehensive of the designs of the centre—The Sheikh himself had second thoughts about the accession. The sheikh realized the futility of Delhi Agreement which tried to demarcate the relations between the centre and the State—and the slogan of full Accession seemed to him hatched one by the

communalists of India as well. However, the legal bases of Delhi Agreement could not be challenged and it had assured the Sher-i-Kashmir that the special provisions were incorporated in the Indian Constitution and later in J&K constitution which safeguarded the return and resettlement of those state subjects stranded in the areas under the occupation of Pakistan, whom the aforesaid provisions of the Delhi Agreement and the constitution recognized as citizens of India and permanent residents of the State.

When the Sheikh recaptured power in 1975, this politics which during Sadiq Sahib's rule polluted through legal defilement, in the opinion of the National Conference Leadership, was revived. When Mrs. Indra Gandhi came to power in the Centre after the fall of Janata, the politics of constitutional relationship was resuscitated by the National Conference under the Sheikh's personality—however, in particular the relationship between the Central and State Leadership deteriorated on the passage and passing of Resettlement Bill. The Bill was introduced in the Legislature, by a member of the National Conference as the private Members Bill, in the year 1980. It aimed at regulating the procedure for permanent return and settlement of the persons who had migrated to Pakistan during 1947-1954. 'It was examined and considered by a Select Committee comprising members from different political parties including Congress (I) and Janata Party and the Legislature passed it in 1982—as recommended by the Select Committee.'¹⁶ The bill was referred to the governor for his assent—the moment it became known that it was passed misgivings started. The National Press was more vehement and according to Inder Malhotra it was regrettable that having passed a dangerous Bill stealthily the State government was making false claims that it had held prior discussions with the centre.¹⁷ Sunder Rajan, in an article conceded that anti-national elements were rallying behind the National Conference in its attempt to facilitate the 'home coming' of an estimated 100,000 sons of the soil who were already full-fledged citizens of Pakistan.¹⁸ The resettlement Bill provoked a major national controversy and fears were raised in most quarters and by major political parties about its legality, timing and political wisdom as the Bill almost gave blanket citizenship to anyone from occupied Kashmir who wanted to return, even if he were a spy or a convict.¹⁹ Similar to these tones were Harinder Baweja who called the Bill and said about A.G Kulkarni referring to Kashmir Resettlement Bill—"Yet another example of Centre-State collusion to befool the country". Consequently too, as the Governor B.K Nehru pointed out, the move certainly made inroads into fields which

were exclusively left to the Central government to handle.²⁰

In rejoinder tones and overtones the government of the National Conference issued statements defending the Bill on certain basic presumptions. These were: -

a). The Delhi Agreement of 1952 recognized the principle of resettlement of Kashmiris migrated to Pakistan during 1947-1954.

b). The Constitution of India and the J&K Constitution guaranteed the resettlement.

c). The fear that the enforcement of the Bill would return persons in great number and result in the eviction of those who possessed the evacuee property was based on misunderstandings. Such doubts were unfounded and misconceived under Section 3-A of Agrarian Reforms Act, displaced persons were deemed to be occupancy tenants and recorded as such.²¹

Consequently, not only were statements issued by the Sheikh and his other ministers, in particular, the law minister but pamphlets were also issued from time to time to defend the bill. Thus the Kashmir politics of Resettlement Bill created a furor during May 1982 to July 1982.²²

During the months before his illness in August 1982, the national press started an all out attack on the Bill but the power base of the National Conference counteracted this challenge. When the tempers on the Bill ran high, Sheikh Sahib met the Governor and it was believed that they discussed the pros and cons of the Bill. It was given to understand that the Governor showed surprise over the counter attacks on the Bill. It was also rumored that the Centre had no objection in the application of such legislation by the State.²³

The debate on the bill did not abate and continued for sometime. The National Conference quarters at this stage were surprised at the decision of referring the Bill to the Attorney General of India. They claimed it to be violation of the constitution of J&K State. The party members thought that it could be sought from the advocate General of the State, in the event it was essential. They advocated that the Governor had no power to reject the Bill and the National Conference members were persistent that in case the Bill was returned with recommendations of the Governor, it would be repassed in its original form.²⁴ In the controversy over the Bill the government, in due course of time took a rigid stand. To avert any further confrontation, the then finance Minister Devi Dass Thakur had dialogues with the Governor.

The Sheikh's attitude was also rigid as he considered the Bill to be dealing with a human problem. According to him, they could challenge the law in the court, after it had been consented to by the Governor. He had the belief that the State Legislature was within its jurisdiction to pass such a bill. Mr. Thakur, later admitted that state legislature was not prepared to concede its powers.²⁵ While the attitude of the State Leadership stiffened, the attitude of Delhi also turned rigid resulting into high level meeting in the Central government. The Congress High Command also discussed the politics involving the passage of Resettlement Bill. At this stage the assent to the Bill by the Governor had become bleak and it was agreed that before the consent, the different norms of the Bill be considered and legal expert advice sought.²⁶ It was also asserted that the Governor must decide with regard to the Bill only after giving cognizance to all matters and situations and also refer it to the Supreme Court for advice before its enforcement.²⁷

By July, the leadership of the state had been informed by the Governor about the advice and objection tendered to him by the Attorney General of India and the Parliament also had been briefed by the Home Minister with regard to the Bill. While the Parliament discussed the Bill, the State government remained silent over it, but it was well known to the political circles in the valley that Governor would return the Bill to the Legislature without giving assent to it.²⁸ At a stage it was believed that over this issue the State Leadership was defeated, when the eminent jurist like Palkhiwala had declared it as unconstitutional.²⁹

The strong reaction to the Bill at the hands of the national press, legal experts and governing elite, resulted into a change in the attitude of the State Leadership. They decided to find out a compromise. It was at this juncture that the Sheikh had possibly invited the Law Minister to come to Srinagar to have talks on the Bill. During August, Mrs. Indra Gandhi's visited the valley, on account of the ailment of the Sheikh, and found a change in State Leadership. Consequently, the Central Leadership was assured that the Bill was not to be made a point of prestige. It was felt that the politics on the Bill could be resolved by a dialogue between the parties.³⁰

The politics of Kashmir resettlement Bill finally culminated into the return of the Bill to the Legislature by twentieth September, 1982, without the Governor's assent. By the time one major tragic event had occurred. The Sheikh, the colossus, having dominated half the century of politics, having capacity to confront and resolve passed away and Kashmiris genuinely felt

that they had lost their father. Sher-i-Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, died on September 8, after a prolonged heart ailment and was given a full farewell by the Kashmiris.³¹ However, he left the legacy of the politics of Kashmir Resettlement Bill for his successor. Secondly, minor but important event had occurred earlier to the tragedy when Abdul Rahim Raza, the sponsor of the Bill in 1980, had become the speaker, disclosed that the Bill had been returned without assent to it and with suggestions for modification. The Legislature being in session for a short time had the choice either to pass the bill or permit it to lapse.

Though the Governor had advised the legislature to reconsider the bill, yet it did not do so—instead the session was extended by one day and the Bill passed in its original form. Consequential upon it, it became an act without having consented to by the Governor. The Governor had suggested that the Bill be reconsidered in the light of its lacune. He pointed out that the following persons could return from Pakistan.

- (i). That he or she had migrated to Pakistan after March 1947.
- (ii). That he or she has intention to resettle in the State permanently.
- (iii). That he was permanent resident of the State before 1954.
- (iv). That he shows an allegiance to the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir and India.

According to the Governor it meant that flood gates of spies would be opened for Pakistan Nationals, who might include such Kashmiri residents who either migrate owing to their convictions or served in Pakistan Army, intelligence or other Pakistan Civil services on the eve of accession of Jammu and Kashmir.³² Since the bill was returned to the legislature, the politics continued unabated between the Central Leadership and the State Leadership under Dr. Farooq Abdullah. In between the return of the Bill and its final passage in the legislature, Dr. Farooq visited Delhi and agreed to the proposal of Mrs. Gandhi to refer the bill to the Supreme Court by the president of India. Thus Bill was passed and referred to the Supreme Court—and the court heard the Bill on October 12, 1982. The Court rejected the plea to issue stay on its enforcement and also directed various political parties including Bhartiya Janata, Panthers, people's Conference, and Jammu Refugee League to file written statements, if they would so choose. Soon after the hearing the law minister, J&K government asserted that the rules and regulations relating to the Resettlement of persons from Pakistan was

ing worked out. He declared that the State Legislature had acted within the Indian and J&K Constitutional framework and asserted that it was passed in due recognition to the human values involved in it.³³

The bill had opposition from the Jammu region and a Bandh was arranged by Bhartiya Janta Party, which, however, had a little success. The Congress (I) within the State had also alienated and sided with the parties opposing the Bill. Right from 1951-1952, the people from Jammu region, in particular Dogra power base, has been clamouring for "Full Accession," and denounce the little autonomy the Constitution of India guaranteed to the people of the State. The government and leadership of India and the government and State Leadership had ever since accession been engaged in this tussle of constitutional relationship. There were compulsions on both sides, which one could not ignore. The Central government wanted constitutional merger of Kashmir to satisfy other regions both for psychological and legal purposes, in particular Bengal, Tamil Nadu and the Punjab etc. Kashmiris wanted to retain autonomy they were promised before 1953. Both are touchy—only future would decide whether the Kashmir politics of constitutional relationship, during the last phase of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's regime, was initiated to retain power by the National Conference or its disapproval by the Congress (I) was a means to capture power or was genuinely a controversy over the constitutional relationship between the State and the Centre. However, Kashmiriologist would accept that since 1952, the controversy over the constitutional relationship is merely an instrument to seek power in the State of Jammu and Kashmir on the one hand and on the part of Jammu people on the other, to secure a place in the State constitutional framework which would provide them with a full and independent share in power.

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BUREAUCRACY THROUGH AGES

Bureaucracy is a concept developed by the German sociologist Max-Weber, who believed that the most rational form for the administration of large scale organizations is bureaucratic apparatus. A bureaucracy is hierarchical (pyramidal) in structure and impersonal. The term has come to be used to refer to the administrative structure of organizations both public and private, whether or not they are "bureaucratic" in the Weberian sense. Thus, in our context of the State bureaucracy, we are in a position to include in this organization all personnel from the Chief Secretary of the State down to the peon working in any department, anywhere in any smallest unit of this organization. This State administrative apparatus, thus in the opinion of American Political Scientist or others in India include it in the same pyramidal form.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has its own history regarding bureaucracy. In ancient Kashmir as Rajtarangni tells us, we find bureaucracy categorized in various branches like executive, judicial, criminal, police and jails, revenue, taxation and registration, education and medical staff and dispensaries. The reference, regarding the functions of these departments in the Rajtarangni shows and proves that bureaucracy pursued and elaborates system of exploitation through taxing people and using other methods of oppression. This system until quite recent times persisted in one or the other form. Its manifold imports on all products and industries, its state monopolies and demands for forced labour, dates back to very early times in Kashmir.

The first King, according to Rajtarangni, who established tradition of bureaucracy, was Jalauka. He established seven main state officials, the Judge, the revenue superintendent, the treasurer, the commander of the army, the envoy, the Prohita and the astrologer. These seven main officials

were further sub-divided to allow them to work in eighteen offices. The office was known as Karmasthana in accordance with the traditional usage. According to Professor Jolly, these eighteen offices evidently corresponding to the 'eighteen Tirthas' or court officials were mentioned in Mahabh. This tradition was mostly followed by later kings. During Jayasimha, a city perfect or administrator was also appointed, who was to carry the administration on the orders of the higher authorities or from the seven main offices and naturally he was under legal system. Curious to note in Jayasimha's reign that there was one officer alone who was unlike others honest and man of integrity.

Though the system of bureaucracy from Jalauka down to the fall of Hindu Rule, continued on the similar pattern as established by Jalauka, yet one feature comes down to us as unique and permanent. According to Lawrence, this feature is that bureaucracy, acted and behaved as an enemy of the people, except at certain intervals when benevolent kings ascended the throne of Kashmir. Stein writes, "perhaps owing to the peculiarities of the administration in Kashmir, the revenue system has had a more momentous effect on the character and development of the people to the following reasons, "Happily hitherto there has been very little litigation in the Valley, so that Judicial department has not had much effect on the people, crime is almost unknown, the police and jails do not concern the great mass of the population, while education and dispensaries are still in their infancy". However, regarding the fall of Hindu Rule in Kashmir, GMD Sufi remarks, "the lack of character among officials appears to be one of the causes of the downfall of the Hindu Rule". This all is meant to illustrate that under a benevolent King the people improved in their total personality because the king could contain the bureaucracy within its fold or domination. Accordingly, in our history, whenever bureaucracy was not permitted to commit to misdemeanor, it was friendly to the common man.

Generally, during Hindu Rule, Kashmir was divided administratively many a time in different zones-sometimes into Maraz and Kamraj and so on. The whole valley, records Stein, has from an early date been divided for administrative purposes into considerable number of small districts known in contemporary times as 'Paragnas'. Their ancient names were 'VISAYA,' Lokaprakasha provides us divisions resulting into the recruitment of bureaucracy which, generally, facilitated exacting more revenue for the Kings and queens.

During Muslim Rule, we find perpetuation of the same system of bureaucracy, excepting short periods. Abul-Fazal's account relates to a systematic statement on the Parganas of Kashmir. It is of a special interest for us owing to the fact that these Parganas could be reorganized at the will of the Kings and queens. These reorganizations were subject to either their fiscal requirements or exacting money or on account of their administrative or fiscal fancies during the times of Mughal and Pathan Rule in Kashmir. The Sikh occupation of the valley could bring no conspicuous change in the set up of bureaucracy. We find thirty six parganas during their rule but they caused certain changes, in the names and the extent of these parganas. It can be examined and analyzed by comparing the list prepared by Moorcraft (1823), Baron Hugel (1835), and Vigne (184). However, most of the historians and foreign visitors have often recorded the inimical attitude of the bureaucracy with regard to the people. Robert Thorp writes about the agents of repression, "over each village there are a number of agents and these are mentioned below; these include 'Muqddum', 'Sargoal', 'Shakdar', 'Tarkardar', 'Harkara' and the Patwari".

The hegemony of bureaucracy continued during the Dogra Rule as well. The frequent changes and redistributions of the Parganas was a regular policy that was followed. The Maharajas inducted more Muslims from outside the state, in addition to the Kashmiri Pandits as well as Dogras, in administration. Thus the bureaucracy recruited from Muslim community exploited the poor Dogras and Kashmiris alike. Major Bates provides an accurate list regarding this recent period. The list shows a total of forty three Parganas in the year 1865. Subsequently, Tehsils were constituted after the fashion of British provinces, with a view to reducing or increasing these divisions from Niabats to divisions of Districts or to contiguous areas which since then has been the fashion of the governments to follow. These divisions were created or reorganized only to enable the administrative apparatus to extract taxes from the poor people.

The Maharaja Sir Hari Singh, as the last king of J&K, governed the state upto its accession to India in 1947. He had inherited a well organized corpus of bureaucracy and improved it during his reign to retain his ascendancy on the throne. It was during his tenure of kingship that state subject concept was developed. It was within the framework of this law that employment in the state was granted to the state subjects to ordinary vacancies and grant of lands for house buildings and other purposes to the

citizens. Administrative reforms were initiated, on the recommendations of the committee appointed in 1923, by the Maharaja, considering future requirement of different departments in technical and non-technical fields. However, after the upsurge in 1931, under the Sheikh, the Maharaja further tried to improve its administration by bringing in bureaucrats from outside the state. Even most of the Ministers from outside appointed by the Maharaja belonged to the creed professed by the majority of the people. The reforms initiated by the Maharaja in appointing the bureaucrats from outside the state, did not in any way improve the condition of administration—bureaucrats did not become the friends of the people.

The post independence era witnessed abrupt change in bureaucratic apparatus. The National Conference and its leadership, in a bid to satisfy the sentiment of the majority/ community recruited every Tom and Dick in its administration. There was no qualitative change in bureaucracy but quantitatively the period witnessed enough expansion in the departments. Bakshi's ascendancy to power further expanded bureaucracy so that he could win the people, who had been rendered restless on account of Sheikh Sahib's arrest in 1953. Thus inefficiency crept into bureaucracy. The people recruited during fifties, in due course of time, were promoted to higher cadre leading to more inefficiency because in-service promotions witnessed more favouritism. During the years between 1953-1964 corruption methods were not only systematized but even legitimized. Even today, I find at the highest rung of bureaucracy, corrupt officials who were conferred IAS, on their access to or relations with the source of power. In the development of the bureaucracy, during the last six decades, we find further degeneration. The bureaucrats today, I think in the history of our state bureaucracy, have reached a stage of their perfect animosity with the people. It has almost come to a war between 'haves' and 'have nots', in Marxian language. The reasons of this enmity are manifold. In the process of appeasement of the majority community in the state by recruiting inefficient people in the service class whether technical, harmed the efficiency of the government. Secondly, in-service promotions caused on the grounds of favouritism, nepotism and corruption rendered bureaucracy inefficient. Appointing or promoting people in the name of backward classes, regional imbalances, affected conspicuously its efficiency. Thus in the bureaucracy at present we find an efficient bureaucrat but corrupt and inefficient bureaucrat, honest. Accordingly, both efficient and inefficient, have proved

to be enemy of the common man, one on account of his inefficiency and another due to his corrupt practices. A bureaucrat has as a rule, many methods to employ. He would in normal course, never say no to anybody—he has not that moral courage. Even if some bureaucrat has such a tendency, it is caused either by inner personal motivations or by external exigencies. In the inner motivations he delays the decisions regarding a file pending with him so that the client is compelled to offer the bribe. In its external exigencies, he is motivated by the immediate bureaucratic boss or the muscle power of the client. In its hierarchy, a clerk incharge of the file with its head assistant and then office superintendent is subjected to the hegemony of Under Secretary through a Deputy Secretary to the Secretary in the Secretariat service. In other case the clerk in the directorate or commissioner of a department through the administrator to the Director may play equally the most important role. In the whole administrative and bureaucratic hierarchy, the clerk, who possesses and keeps the file in his custody, is the kingpin in the vicious circle of bureaucratic rule. It is this kingpin clerk who is neuculus in the whole hierarchy. He is the sole interpreter of the file he keeps in his custody—the file to him is dead heap of leaves of pages. To him, the file has no life nor does it involve any soul unless some human being owns it. The moment the file is owned by someone, it moves—it generates heat and moves. It moves in the interest of both the parties—the clerk alongwith the hierarchy and the client behind the file. The decision maker regarding the file, at the juncture interprets it in the way it suits him. Thus, in the context of the present meaning of the bureaucracy, the clerk has become flatterer, opportunist, arrogant and counter-productive. The clerks make majority in the sum total of bureaucratic setup in the state and hence he commands and bureaucrat only 'agrees' in most of the cases. It is the rule of the clerk.

A clerk is the modern agent of repression and exploitation. He is the interpreter of the department rules and even law of the state. He is the sumum Bonum of the administration—he is faithful to his self and to the officer, who accepts his advice unhesitatingly. He is the lord of the office. He is the lord of the Secretariat and he is the pivot round which the whole bureaucracy moves.

The clerk has a nack to delay the case, give judgement on the file which is in his interest—he has 'Actual will'—he is not governed by the general will. He is every time selfish, he is every time self-centered. He is the woman

of the administration who entraps anybody she desires. Those who do not fall under his prey—stand to be unpraised. Those who are entrapped are showered favours. The education bureaucracy, let me recall can make an efficient teacher in a college berserk and an inefficient one as Principal. The University, the seat of higher learning is a tool in the hands of bureaucrats. Recently, I met some university bureaucrats, who as the members of the selection committee were already committed to candidates who were to be selected by the said committee. All schools in the valley are run by bureaucrats. Bureaucrat, in any niche of education department can delay a case beyond two to three years to kill it at his table. A clerk has developed over the years the characteristics of a flatterer, opportunist, arrogant and counter-productive. He commands and his officers only 'agrees' to the advice, My clerk, in my Higher Education Secretariat, killed my application for 'No objection Certificate' by delaying it for more than a year.

It is the bureaucracy in the state, which makes the amature politician corrupt. In the Secretariat, in the field and at the local level, it corrupts respective local leader. The local bureaucrat out of it enjoys the blessings of the local leader through cancellation of transfers or adjustments according to personal choice. In reverse, the local bureaucracy as enemy of the people, make hay while the sun shines. The same method operates at the higher levels of bureaucracy. To seek a prize post, higher echelons in bureaucracy offer bribes to the transferring of promoting agency. Thus in the state corruption becomes pyramidal—the Walpole method is employed.

Each Department has its own bureaucratic rule. The revenue department has a long history in the state, to enjoy dominance over others. The Department of Revenue bureaucracy has its known history as instrument of oppression and exploitation. Its bureaucracy is inimical to the poor men and its greatest exploiter. Even today if a teacher is to be appointed, it is the deputy commissioner, who selects him, which, as a matter of specialization should be the domain of department of education. Similar to these, the revenue bureaucrat disburses subsidiaries to the orchardists. There is hardly any aspect of citizens which is not dealt with by the Revenue bureaucrat. The Secretariat, whether it commands from Jammu or Srinagar, acts as the mind of the total organism of bureaucracy. It is fed by the lower rung of it—it results into inputs or outputs from the below. General politics might emanate from the above but its outputs quantitatively are pro-

vided from the lower agencies which feed it back well through corrupt practices. Education and health has the lowest feedback and hence the priorities in expenditures are minimal. Thus the bureaucracy acts as enemy of the people by qualitatively and quantitatively decorating the operation of the policies which are designed to help all sections and segments of society in the state. At the financial inputs and outputs the whole administration is a burden on the exchequer of the state due to the bureaucratic apparatus. It seems that someday, the state shall run berserk on account of more losses to the state. Presently, bureaucrats, of the secretariat level, concentrates all powers with it.

The bureaucracy, of the Departments like Police, Forestry, Finance, Industries, Local Govts, electricity works and power and the like have very little productive results. They are rendered ineffective by bureaucracy by making rules contrary to the interests of the public. Police in the state has a legacy to be enemy of the public from times immemorial—even during ancient times the police or para troopers were king makers like Lavanyas and Tantarass. During the Mughals, Sikhs and Dogras police behavior towards public remained usually inauspicious. In the history of our Kashmir poetry and Dogra literature we find condemning verses in favour of the police. During the last three decades the theory was afloat that two or three Chief Ministers in the state could not move out without the permission of highest Police Officers. In the public the rumors were spread that the highest police authorities confined these chief Ministers in their respective bathrooms.

The Jammu and Kashmir bureaucracy has evolved a definite and precise inimical posture against the people which explains to us its total personality. The clerk, simply avoids a client in the office by saying tomorrow your work shall be done. Next day, the clerk will not be in his seat, either on account of leave or on other excuse. The third day the clerk would be in office but the officer would be on tour. The process would continue till the client is frustrated and discouraged. The client would accordingly, act like a research scholar by investigating the whereabouts regarding the clerk and the superior clerk. If in the process of investigations a palm is greased, the file is resurrected and awards granted. In case the research fails, the file is declared "dead" and thereby untraceable. In between the 'greezing' of the palm and 'not greezing', the lowest rank would convey to the client that he had written very fine note on his file, but the officer has rejected it,

advising him to arrange influence on the superior. Sometimes, he would promise him help and at other time show inability to help on account of rules. In due process of this Wallpolian method, once the palm is greased, the case is found sanctioned under rules. The anti climax of this game that a file is treated a dead file until the person involved turns up someday to tell them that it involves a human soul. All files on shelves of the secretariat and other offices in state are treated dead leaves of paper—they all move when the soul is siphoned into them. This bureaucratic behavior is unexplainable at least with regard to the persons who understand the meaning of the verse of the holy Quran that both the persons at the receiving and paying end of bribes shall be thrust into the hell.

EDUCATIONAL BUREAUCRACY

Brooks Atkinson once remarked that bureaucracy is designed to perform public business—however, as soon as bureaucracy is established, it develops an autonomous “spiritual life” and comes to regard the public as its enemy. The bureaucracy in the state of J&K was established in its present form, immediately after the accession of the state to India in 1947. Sheikh Mohd Abdullah and his colleagues designed it to perform public good or to act in pursuance of the supreme good of the people of J&K State. By the end of the Bakshi regime, the bureaucracy in the state had developed an autonomous “spiritual life” and consequently at present it regards public as its enemy. It has developed autonomy and relinquished itself from its political control.

The bureaucracy has become enemy of the public by adopting methods which run contrary to the public interests. The interest of the state, which according to bureaucrats is the sacred trust with them, is not their concern at present because they deliberately harm people both individually and collectively. In the opinion of the public, the interest of the state has by experience come to mean the interest of the bureaucrats. To further their individual interest the bureaucracy, has established the methods of manipulations, procrastination, suspension, prolongation of cases, filibustering and postponement and the like. In shelving or opening an individual or collective or other cases or the like a member of the bureaucracy has only one design to fulfill and it is the acceptance of ‘Nazrana’ or bribes or favour someone of his choice or kins.

Bribery is the practice of tendering and accepting private advantage as a reward for the violation of duty. According to Encyclopedia, to bribe is to control by means of tangible inducements rather than by persuasion or

coercion. In the dictionary meaning, bribery includes:

- a) the act of corrupting
- b) the state of being corrupt
- c) moral perversion
- d) perversion of integrity
- e) baseness of dishonesty
- f) putrefaction and putrescence.

The bureaucracy in the state of J&K has developed, over the years, such an autonomous life that it has come to chaff unknown in our history. True that exceptions are still filling certain gaps in the hierarchy—however, these exceptions die unheard and unwept in our society. They are unknown to most of the people and they have never been permitted to work for the supreme good of the people. They are rendered useless cogs in the bureaucratic apparatus of the state.

The state of J&K has over the years, failed to punish corrupt bureaucrats because their number is very large. From an ordinary clerk in an office upto the highest rung in bureaucracy; hardly anybody has ever been convicted for any corrupt practice. May be that a junior or petty clerk is caught red handed in a case of corruption and propagated well over TV or Radio, but we have failed to hear the lions, cubs and others in the bureaucratic apparatus to have been caught in the snare. Most of the biggies have clean slate or were permitted to be scot free. In the history of Kashmir, I find among others, one great king who punished bureaucracy severely when he ascended the throne of Kashmir. His name was Uccala who ruled Kashmir during 1101-11 AD. He believed, “Officials in truth are eager to kill, desirous of evil, robbers, of others property, rogues and demons. He (the king) should protect his subjects from them”. He followed this traditional counsel faithfully and accordingly uprooted ‘Kayasthas’ or officials. The king Uccala believed that officials are plagues for the people, not only cholera, colic and exhaustion rapidly destroying everybody. According to belief during his time, people accepted that crab kills its father, and the white aunt destroys her mother, the ungrateful Kayasthas when he has become powerful destroys everything. The theory regarding the behavior of Kayasthas or officials in modern times bureaucracy remains the same in present times as it existed in Uccala’s time. It was believed during that time

of that king that once a man of mark was promoted to higher position and gave him distinction, the rogue just was Vetala or demon, slayed him without scruple. According to the King, an official is like a poison tree makes the ground upon which he grows up, unapproachable. The King had known that some people, in order to get employment made even their mother, sister, daughter and wife offer their persons to men of higher rank. Uccala, however, as a faithful servant to the cause of people's welfare suppressed these corrupt officials through, degrading, dismissing and arresting them. The King dismissed an official Sahela and many others and made them to wear clothes of hemp in Jail and Bhuthisca was made to run like a Domba soldier. Alas, today, with the worst stuff of officials, no punishment takes place against them if some foul is played by them. Instead these officials of corrupt practices are usually considered efficient and promoted.

While bureaucracy is thought by some to be the ideal form for the service of society, many treat it having dysfunctional effects. "Bureaucratic personality" is known to political scientist or social scientists in general to be characterized as Wasby says, by rigidity and over-attentive to procedures which we as Laymen call red-tape. The fact is that the members of bureaucracy, once established, as we have in the state presently, form an attitude, which is peculiar and also different from the general attitudes of the people.

Education, alone, for a long time had no such bureaucratic attitude or it, one would say, lacked bureaucratic attitude or "Bureaucratic Personality". However, the main reason for lacking this attitude in education was that the department was run by a teacher-scholar sentiment for a long time. Since the rule of the last Maharaja of the state, the department of education was run by an eminent educationist who by temperament could not develop "Bureaucratic Personality". My privilege as a teacher in colleges was to serve under the eminent educationists like Khaja Saiyidain, Mr. M.M Beg, Prof Aga Ashraf, Prof. Satya Bushan as commissioners of the department of education. Prof. Satya Bushan is the last educationist of these noted academicians, who administered the department. Those who followed him till date constitute IAS Cadre's, bureaucratic personalities. These personalities were imposed on the teachers by amateur politicians as directors, commissioners and the like. Even teachers appointments are made by "Bureaucratic Personalities".

The IAS, KAS, or other members of bureaucracy believe that they are

"Aqli Kul" or Absolute Wisdom" and hence they alone can be governing elite. To them, a politician, a leader and a political, educational or social activist is nothing more than a 'Fool incarnate'. Further, the situation is aggravated in terms of bureaucratic totalitarianism because, under the influence of bureaucracy, principals of colleges, district education officers, Tehsil Officers, block education Officers, and headmistresses, turned more bureaucratic staff. The educational bureaucracy has thus established an attitude of the general bureaucracy—the attitude of a 'master and a slave' and teachers' helplessness before a clerk or a bureaucrat is a matter of fact. I sent a reply to a query pertaining to my 'No objection Certificate' for the renewal of my passport direct to the Secretariat, Higher Education. The commandant from the Deputy Secretary in the Higher Education was that I had violated usual procedure for which I had to tender an apology and had to pocket many insults politely.

Bureaucracy in general and bureaucracy within education have naturalized the department of education to the state of anarchy. There are deliberate attempts to destroy the system of education in the state and bring it at par with the departments which have lost their creditability and legitimacy. The moral superiority of the teachers, under a conspiracy, is being destroyed gradually so that the total chaos, in terms of educational values, in Kashmir sociology, is achieved. The responsibility directly goes to the bureaucratic apparatus within the education department. The clerk, whether superior or inferior, is the pivot round whom the whole system revolves. A teacher is not pivotal but the clerk is the fulcrum round whom all the fouls are played. A recent example of the college principals will illustrate my contention. During last three or four years, the secretariat of the Higher Education, on the fall of vacancies of principal posts, filled them on the principle of adhocism. Accordingly, those of the college teachers, who were favourites of the clerks in the department, were kept incharge Principals for many years. Whatever, pecuniary gains of the secretariat, no norms were adhered to in selecting such principals. Sometimes a junior kept incharge by transferring the seniors in the colleges—most of them had many seniors both in terms of tenure in office and qualifications. It was followed by bureaucracy terrorist act, so that they could have more gains than what they earned from adhocism. The government on the demand of college teachers issued an order sanctioning UGC pay-scales to college teachers with all conditions and recommendations as stipulated

under UGC scheme. Pay-scales were adopted but norms were flouted on the recommendations of the bureaucracy. The bureaucratic apparatus, immediately after adoption of UGC scheme, got issued S.R.O. 410 with almost the same pay-scales (partially implemented as yet) but the norms regarding selection of principals were modified, in their own interest. The SRO said that the case of principals was already referred to PSC and selection to be made by DPC. The moral of the issue revolves round the fact that a committee under earlier rules selected Principals for the post, which stood obsolete with the order issued by the government accepting UGC pay scales. According to earlier rules the commissioner for education and one member of PSC constituted the committee. Earlier, both the members were necessarily and morally to be eminent educationists—this time, under bureaucratic counsel and under over attention to procedural matters, two non-intellectual bureaucrats and one expert by proxy, who had enough 'Wazwans' in Srinagar during his stay, sat on judgment to nearly fifteen hundred teachers in colleges. In choosing only fourteen teachers out of the lot to be principals of colleges, neither qualification nor seniority but pick and choose was the criteria. Injustice is not caused to the teachers from Jammu but gross injustice is done to the teachers from the valley. The variance in selection of candidates from Jammu and the valley is surprising and is best known to these "gems" they have selected. . . . Respect for teachers in colleges and in every office and institution, is hierarchical rather than random. By denying this hierarchical position to the teacher's community the two bureaucrats have done the greatest disservice to the educational system in the state. Would these two bureaucrats ever like to work under their juniors, I ask? The fantastic revelations were experienced in the interview. Many teacher-scholars with contributions to the disciplines were often remanded that Principalship did not suit their scholarship. One of them was asked an impertinent question that he would not get the opportunity to contribute if he were appointed Principal. The answer to this third rate question was that the writing work is performed usually during night at the cost of one's sleep. Another teacher whose published book named "Kashmir Prediliction" was asked the meaning of the word "Prediliction" because the member did not know its meaning and the author had to turn dictionary for a moment. Excluding myself, I do not claim any scholarship, many scholar-teachers much senior to the "Fourteen Karat gold medalist" were not selected because scholarship was their disqualification to become principals.

Bureaucracy, under the cover of over-attention to procedural matters, befools any individual and groups or the like. The college teachers were easily befooled under the cover of scholarship recognized by UGC norms. Education Secretariat, accordingly issued a letter inviting fifteen teachers for one post, with a demand of placing before the committee articles published in various periodicals, magazines, journals or published works and so on. It also asked for any other academic contributions. The bureaucracy in Higher Education and in colleges, placed before the committee or DPC the APR's of all the teachers who attended the interview. It was surprising that the educational bureaucracy had filled the APR's of favourites with the words "Excellent" at relevant columns even when they were suspended for the years the APR's stood for. These APR's were also filled by Principals regarding the teachers, who did not work under them. The teacher's examination results were manipulated so that the remark "Excellent" in APR could be justified. It is really unfortunate that nearly fifteen hundred college teachers were befooled by a dozen of bureaucrats and those who were selected as Principals, had no research or academic record.

The UGC scheme provides that the college shall have three tier systems in pay-scales. Those of the teachers with Ph.D's with sixteen years service are to be placed in reader's grade but are to be designated as selection-grade lecturers. Readers could only be appointed as Principals in accordance with their strict seniority —the scheme as such was designed to stop the promotional politics or struggle for rising higher and thus pave way for better educational standards. The bureaucracy in higher education Secretariat in connivance with some third rate teachers who were interested in their self rather than educational community manipulated to issue SRO 410. The bureaucracy felt that the honest operation of the UGC scheme would minimize their role in the Secretariat as the "absolute wisdom" over and above the teachers in the state. Its net result was deviation from the UGC norms. The bureaucracy justifies the deviation from the rules on two grounds. Firstly, that UGC scheme empowers the states to modify the scheme and secondly the reference to DPC of the posts was not contested by the teachers—instead most of them had presented themselves before the committee. The logic is untenable. The UGC scheme is prepared by very eminent educationists at the centre and the "absolute wisdom" shall feel shy before them. Secondly the scheme is designed to remove competitive spirit for educational bureaucracy and instead prepare teachers for academic competitions. Thirdly, the college teachers in the state had

fought to seek the implementation of the scheme—thus those teachers who could not fulfill the qualifications had no moral ground to claim for special benefit, however, their financial benefits were protected. Finally, what financial gains have been achieved by the government or the state of J&K by flouting the UGC norms on the counsel of the bureaucrats is a pertinent question. The beneficiary under the counsel of the bureaucracy is the bureaucracy itself. The sacred trust with the bureaucracy is not the interest of the state, but their own self. The articulation of the interest is known to all in terms of nepotism, bribery and the like. The educational bureaucracy, whether borrowed or permanent earns both out of adhocism and selection. The ills of this bureaucratic manipulation shall be felt in colleges in due course of time. Thus educational system which is essential for the national integration and for evolving democratic attitudes towards local and national issues is destroyed by the self-centered bureaucracy. Let these, non-intellectual and over attentive mongers to procedural matters realize that history shall never forgive them. My words shall go deep into the pages of history of education in the state and tell the posterity, that uncontrolled bureaucracy shall destroy their educational and social fabric. The politician also need understand that unbridled bureaucracy is a black stain on their political leadership.

CHANGING VALUES IN POLITICS

There are people, both social scientists and laymen, who believe that values change whether social or political, from time to time. At the same time some believe that values do not change. Let me contend that values change but values we talk of are the values known to us as the cultural values.

Naturally, they remain the domain of sociology. When we talk of changing values in politics, we become interested in the 'unending social conditions' that affect government and politics. When we have to study exchanging values and politics we are concerned with two types of values. One set of values is that of cultural values and the other set is that of political values. Each set of values is closely related to each other. For example respect for elders is in consonance with the respect for people's representatives or legislators.

The underlying social conditions as I have borrowed the phrase, involve those values, which determine the social conditions in its political perspective. For example, an understanding of changes in the group structure of society before 1947, in Kashmir, such as the assimilation or responsible government and a constitutional system, in the document of Naya Kashmir, envisaged by the social system at the time.

In the post-1947, after the installation of responsible government, the political value structure shifted to struggle for power. The struggle for power resulted into the assimilation of various ethnic groups. The groups like Gujjars, Kashmiris, Ladakhis and Dogras, did not only run the race for power but their sub-groups turned to be pressure groups in their own right. In the state the outcome of constitutionalism was elections, voting, and emergence of bureaucracy, legislative and judicial system. Thus, political events depended on what happened in other areas of social life of Kashmir before 1947. The peasants, who before 1947, lived below subsistence level, were raised to the standard of subsistence level. It has till date

made the plough (Hal) a sanctimonious symbol of every election. The political decisions in the post-1947 by the political leadership were accordingly influenced by changing values. The land-reforms, without compensation, in the state were such political decisions which were subject to changing perceptions on politics.

It is interesting to note that at the establishment of constitutional government in Jammu and Kashmir, the desired political arrangement depended upon freedom. Our social organization and cultural values demanded that the people should seek freedom and establish institutions, for its fulfillment. A social organization sustains political freedom by creating a balance of power among potentially dominant groups. The freedom at the time was a social value but depended on the group structure of society. These groups usually maximize individual independence when they are autonomous and roughly equal in strength. These groups check one another's power. However, a pluralist social system is based on a desired political system. The case of a pluralist system is different on account of its nature. If society is totalitarian, monolithic political culture will emerge; if democratic the political culture shall be democratic.

The cultural values of a society influence and affect the stability of political authority and thereby, the orderly process of government. When the Kashmir social system initiated a constitutional government, the rights and duties of those who govern and that of governed, were defined. In a stable political orders these values are rooted in a peoples traditions and the vice versa. In Kashmir, they were not rooted in our tradition, they were superfluously imposed, and thereby the political arrangement in Jammu and Kashmir were built upon an alien system and thereby weak and unstable. Our constitutional system after 1947 till date exhibited instability and weakness of the system because constitutionalism was not in our social theory. Any constitutionalism regulates the struggle for power and when constitutionalism is not a social theory, it causes political friction. It is too glaring an experience with the Jammu and Kashmir sub-political system. To be specific, the downfall of the then Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in 1953 is a sacred proof for it. In such a case changing values from feudal structure of society before 1947 and freedom seeking society after accession resulted in a change in political perception. Again by the middle of fifty's the desire to gain power, without shared belief in the constitutional way, or in the procedures for seeking power, meant instability and

evolution of weak political culture. This happened because the people lost faith in the system. The connection between power and culture remained weak. No power seekers, who do not abide by socially approved rules, are success in public life. If they persist, they alienate themselves from the people, and various groups isolate themselves from them. The political linkage is missing. Its consequence is that political system or sub-system turns to be insecure.

Two concepts of politics, powers and legitimacy are dependent to cultural values. Political order is dependent on the stability of authority. Legitimacy refers to the justification of power by linking it in society to cultural values. In case of changing values, all groups develop moral justification for the unequal distribution of power. Each culture justifies authority in accordance with its major values. Since the establishment of our political sub-system in Kashmir, we witnessed that none of our rulers had emerged with its legitimacy, though they tried to justify their rule by its de facto possession. Our social system, except the election of 1977, did not share the belief that their rulers, govern with the consent of the society. The society in general did not accept the desirability of the constitutional arrangement. Today, with change in values, the society feels that earlier constitutional arrangements were better than living without any arrangements. Today, it would be correct to say as Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick would say:

"Those who govern can feel morally justified in controlling the lives of others; and those who are governed can feel that there is some larger reason for accepting discipline than the mere will of the stronger."

Needless to add, that even dictators like Hitler and Zia-ul-Haq tried to seek legitimacy for their rule. Legitimate power tends to be restrained power. However, even legitimate governments have oligarchic elements in their regimes because discretionary powers are retained by the heads of the governments. Too little legitimacy which means that social foundations of that legitimacy are too weak is a major source of political instability. In Kashmir social foundations for legitimacy remained usually weak, expectations apart and consequential upon it, values prompted our society to destabilize our governments from time to time.

Political behavior in modern political science refers to the participation of individuals in politics. It involves how and why people vote and why voters hold political opinions. They belong to different associations

and support candidates in elections and sometimes political movements. Culture being the basis of political order, transmission of values is important for political stability. These values make the personality of a political individual or political man. It is this background that prepared a Kashmiri to participate in politics, hold political opinions and vote according to his choice. Some remain indifferent. The family determines the origin of political attitude. Since 1947, due to negative political approach in many families, many people developed either indifference to politics or were allergic to constitutionalism. We know that once a child develops a particular political attitude, he carries it with him till death. We know that in Kashmir the committed voters before 1989 showed allegiance to the same groups even during gun culture, though they remained silent. Similar to it is the committed voter of the jamaat-e-islami, who during the onslaught against them on the death of late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto did not change their opinions, though most of them had in writing disowned their party loyalty. Usually adult citizens keep themselves abreast of major political issues and vote in elections. When I asked a youth that new government must subsidize food grains as before, his was the prompt answer 'No'. Instead he wished subsidized dish antenna. Political environment if polluted by pursuing wrong policies by the leadership, people develop apathy to political culture. Political education should be genuine not negative in nature. From 1953-1975, people in the State were educated for plebiscite and later it was discarded considerably. The feedback was so devastating that some leadership desired the people to abandon the TV's and other luxurious items and purchase a Kalashnikov. Thus political attitudes and opinions were either directed for betterment according to some or misdirected by others in the valley and in many other parts of Jammu and Kashmir. Just a year or so in the past, people had developed such an apathy for politics that one used to hear usually that politics is evil and maybe it is necessary evil, which had its roots in their tradition by treating politics as 'Yervan-e-Nav' or anarchy.

There are many factors that influence the political skill of the people. Education is one of the most important. The values remain changing and accordingly the political skills vary widely amongst people. Both electorate and candidates who contest, in modern politics have developed complexities. They have to consider multitude of complex issues. Domestically, they need know how taxes, levies are to be fixed and how economic growth is possible. How social welfare and other related problems can be solved? Foreign policy and its intricacies are known to very few people in the State.

To us, people vary in the political skill. Any villager and most of the uneducated classes in the urban areas, looking at the ballot paper only understand the language of the plough (Hal). For the peasantry it is the life experience. Therefore, in Kashmir self-interest has developed as a weapon and as a potent political incentive in determining the political skill. The normal level of falling into the interest for politics has vanished in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the valley on the ground that politics has none of the public interest. It is believed that there are people who are attracted by the sense of duty in public interest in any political system. In Kashmir, however, people having no political skill are led by the changing value system. For example, during last three decades pursuit of wealth in the society, has come to stay as a source of honour and prestige and hence everybody protects this value. A politician not living a five star culture, an orchardist without a bungalow, a businessman without show of wealth is "Shikasladh" in our culture. A bureaucrat demonstrating wealth, a politician living a five star culture, an orchardist with a bungalow and car, a businessman decorative with Shawl and Pashmina is "Photmut" or demonstrative personality. It is here in this complex and changing value structure that the people in the State lose political skill. A political skill or emotional involvement are associated with what Riesman called 'political styles'. These political styles are of two kinds. Those people who possess very low political competence and are indifferent to politics. Another group has very high levels of political competence but little emotional involvement but such people are manipulative. A democratic order needs highly skilled people to participate in politics. In India in general, democracy has not become a social theory or to say correctly, Constitutionalism in India has not emanated from tradition and cultural history. Regarding Kashmir, constitutionalism has no linkage to its culture and history and no deliberate attempts have ever been made to educate people for political skill.

Primary groups usually transmit fundamental political values to the people. They become the source to develop particular political attitudes and opinions. These groups become a source of incentive to political participation. For example, "peace process" as slogan by the primary groups was an incentive for many to go to the polls in recent elections in the State. For the skilled, autonomy was a motivating factor in recent elections. The influence of primary group experience on political attitudes, voting behavior and participation has revealed in recent elections that people turn to changing value structure. In such cases people having common political

ideas and behavior is the result of close personal relations. Finally, primary groups, opinion leaders mobilize and direct the formation and expression of political attitudes. Recently, the non-participation of National Conference in Lok Sabha elections was formation of a political attitude towards the State Assembly elections.

Political behavior is also determined by changing values. Though political values and attitudes are determined by many factors, change can take place at any time.

Political behavior is also determined by changing values. Though political values and attitudes are determined by many factors, change can take place at any time. Different generations or stratifications, similar occupations, similar economic opportunities, common economic position, similar standards of living, common views, higher status and economic interest groups, unemployed youth and womenfolk whether employed or unemployed, determine the political behavior in developing states like India. These people feel that they have common enemies and a common fate. As a result they support organizations that look into their immediate interests and then join collective action.

Next, to understand the political process, one has to analyze the types of associations in politics. There are patterns of interaction amongst these associations. Association is the basic unit of politics. We find struggle for power within and without these associations. Individuals act as agents, members and supporters. Individuals cannot be meaningful actors in the political dramas but associations or groups or political parties function. The members of the party are candidates for office and they take responsibility for running the government. In Kashmir, party is important, for Kashmiris do not vote a candidate of their choice but party of their choice. Pressure groups and contact influence the party members, who are in power, for their interest either for economic reasons or for employment purpose.

Political process includes movement that may be launched. A movement is concerted effort to change some aspects of existing political order. In Political Science or Political Sociology, its scope is limited but there are some people who treat movement or movements to make a complete change. However, a movement includes all formal and informal groups—better to say all people but many remain unconcerned. Movements carry with them

all kinds of associations inclusive of all parties, interest groups etc.

Lastly, changing values and perceptions regarding politics emanate from collective behavior. Such behavior is spontaneous and unstructured behavior. This behavior is full of uncertainties. It is not based on the guidance of cultural values and institutional rules. It develops when people become disturbed and restless on account of misgovernment. Collective behavior is significant because it often leads to new political values and practices. The collective behavior, if directed properly, leaves lasting effects, otherwise it affects adversely on the political order.

To sum up, it is pertinent to say after S.L Wasby, an American Political Scientist, that sociology of politics is the process by which people acquire political values, not simply during active political participation but also in the period before they engage in any explicitly political activity.

KASHMIR BUREAUCRACY AND DEMOCRACY

It is an old dictum that history repeats itself. In the changing times, it may or may not be relevant today. However, according to E.H Carr history needs to be mastered. Understanding of history is the key to the understanding of the present. To our leadership it is not necessary to master it—they never understand their history to understand Kashmiris better.

In our ancient history of Kashmir, Kalhan Pandit referring to bureaucracy makes us conscious about the class of administrators. According to him the clerks (highest to the lowest) have evolved their own characteristics. He says no one is ungrateful if not a clerk. The class of officials according to him can make a King or mar him. Jayapida, the king of Kashmir, was beseeched by officials that instead of undergoing hardships of great conquests and similar adventure, he should seek riches from his own kingdom. By advising thus, they simply turned a pious king into the most oppressive prince. One of his treasury officials excited his desire for treasures beyond measure. The king thus became prey to avarice. Consequential to it, the king always looked at the faces of the officials for guidance. They in return paid him a little as compared to the loot they perpetuated in the kingdom. Harsa (1089—1101) tormented the people through the Kayasthas (officials) by heavily taxing them. Kayasthas razed towns, villages and cities to ground by the heavy fines they inflicted and collected. Those who disobeyed the orders of the collectors were either killed or pushed out of their country.

According to Kalhan, courtesans, the officials (Kaysthas), the clerk (Divira) and the merchant, were one and all deceitful by nature. They are in this respect superior to a poisoned arrow that they have been trained under a teacher's advice. He believed that by trusting a clerk who wears white clothes and smells of incense, his ruin is not far off. Uccala, the king

had the worst experience regarding bureaucracy. He loved his subjects and had known how the officials ruin a king or how they oppressed common people. Before he ascended the throne, he had known how bureaucracy had ruined even most benevolent kings. In response to his experience and knowledge he was conscious of the unacceptable personality of the bureaucracy. He therefore treated his officials as robbers of other's property. He never gave them distinction because that would have been simply King's death warrant. He treated officials as poisonous tree, which makes itself unapproachable by all cannons of his experience. The king accordingly used many methods to keep them under control. He suppressed them through degradation, dismissal from office and even imprisonment.

The king Jayasimha (1128-1149 AD) also was betrayed by his own bureaucracy or the class that administrated Kashmir on his behalf. The intriguers regarding dethroning the king were usually carried by the Kayastha or officials. The Chamberlian (Laksmaka), who rose to power as an officer and then minister did not allow others to grow by his side. He was uprooting all with the greatest ease as if they were blades of grass. Kalhan visualizes that Kings who do not properly understand their servants or administrative officials invite ruin. According to Kalhan, Kayasthas and bureaucracy have elements of intrigues in them. Sujji, for example intrigued against Jayasimha. Udayana, a scheming Kayastha of great ambition, and others planned treason against the king jointly.

During Sultans of Kashmir, Chaks, Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs and Dogras, bureaucracy remained unchanged. The clerk, the revenue officer, tax collector or Karkun or any section of the total class of bureaucracy, till 1947, were instrumental in perpetuating oppression against the people. However, after the Muslim Kashmir, bureaucrats were not ambitious in capturing the throne. They however, did betray their masters through perpetuating tyranny and exploiting them in their own interests. The governors appointed by Mughals, Afghans, and Sikhs had the advantage that their masters were out of the scene and they exploited people to the hilt. However, the dependence on the whims and idiosyncrasies of the bureaucrats either appointed by the foreign rulers or the locals had the experience of callousness of bureaucrats.

In the political system that emerged after 1953 in the state of J&K, political leaders turned political demagogues. After 1947, we had Maharaja's bureaucratic apparatus, which was carried for some years but

soon it was overhauled by the democratic governments. The political change in 1953, whatever may be the reasons; bureaucracy started developing its personality. As soon as bureaucracy was developing with the zeal that common and poor be benefited, corruption grew both under the carpet and out of it. The leadership and bureaucracy developed a wallpolian method of corruption. During fifties in 20th century, I recollect from the horse's mouth, that a father desired his matriculate son to be appointed as teacher. He contacted the then P.M alongwith the local MLA. When the application was handed over to the PM, he asked the MLA to lend him two hundred rupees. Later the application after orders appended on it Rs 200/- in an envelope, addressed to the Director of education, was handed over to the applicant. Consequential upon it, the Director issued the orders to that effect, putting the money in his pocket.

The growth of bureaucracy moved fast toward its perfect adulthood by 2000 AD. When bureaucracy develops its personality, it turns to be the enemy of the people. Unfortunately, it did not only turn enemy of the people by earning as much money as possible but also accepted bribes easily without inhibitions. The corruption as such was given a system and reached its heights and turned into the destroyer of the people as well as the state. During this phase of the personality of the bureaucratic apparatus, bribery since 1988 was open and brazen faced. At the juncture, tailoring of rules to suit their self-interest became a matter of routine. The norms were so amended that appointments, promotions and suitable postings for the bureaucrats, was ensured. The bureaucracy determined the criteria for appointment and every year they use it to further their interests. During elections the administrative staff helped the political parties to capture power. It is now king maker in their own interests. The power that may be installed by them helps the bureaucrats to ensure better placements and extensions. A Deputy Commissioner rejects all the applicants against a political party candidate and the candidate of the ruling party is fixed. There is hardly any doubt about the marriage of the political leadership and the bureaucrats.

The evolution of bureaucracy suggests, as indicated above, that given the power, bureaucracy destroys the common man. According to Kalhan Pandit if a person trusts a hunter because he bears on his fore head a mark of sandal ointment, because he wears white clothes and smells incense, his ruin is not far off. Recently the tendency of bureaucrats of Kashmir to join

a political party is manifest. They either go on premature retirement or retire and then seek mandate. One has already occupied a ministerial berth. Some known bureaucrats have already joined different parties. Bureaucrats and political leaders join together on the platform and in due course of time a political party may have sizable number of bureaucrats in it. Their claim at the same times is based on expertise saying they can govern well as compared to amateurs. Given the situation of merging political leaders with the class of bureaucrats and vice versa, it is believed that it will take away the life of a Kashmiri in a moment. This collusion is just a dangerous scorpion which kills while biting at six places instantly.

The trend amongst the members of the bureaucratic apparatus to join politics is a dangerous phenomenon which is expecting to severely damage the little democracy that Kashmiris could enjoy. It is marriage of the two exploiting classes that has proved tyrannical to the people. It has damaged the political party system in the state. The bureaucrat in Kashmir has proved unscrupulous and they cannot be faithful to political party leadership. Kalhan has rightly warned:

"The fishes of the sea and kings are alike
(in this): the former think the cloud liberal
when it sends down (some) drops
from their own water which had
been drawn up. The later too, alas,
believe inwardly in the faithful
services of the wicked tribe of
officials when it gives up a
few trifles after openly looting
everything".

GEOGRAPHY BEHIND RELIGIOUS PERSONALITY

The physical personality of Kashmir is essentially self-identified and self-isolated. In the accounts of M.A Stein of the ancient Topography of Kashmir it is recorded that the great mountain barriers around the Valley, until modern times isolated its population from the countries on the sub-continent. In more vehement argument Fredric Drew, wrote, "The Kashmiri people are doubtless physically the finest of all the races that inhabit the territories we are dealing with and I have not much hesitation in saying that in size and in feature they are the finest race on the whole sub-continent of India. Their physique, their character and their language are so marked as to produce a nationality different from all around, as distinct from their neighbours as their country is geographically separated".

Kashmir owes its historical or religious unity and isolation to the same facts which give to its geographical position a distinct and in some respects almost unique character. Stein writes that we find here a fertile plain embedded among high mountain ranges, a valley large enough to form a kingdom for itself and capable of supporting a highly developed civilization. Its height nowhere is less than 5000 ft. and its peculiar position assure to it a climate equally free from the heat of India and rigorous of cold, peculiar to the higher mountain regions in the north and east. The form of the Valley has been justly likened to a great irregular oval consisting of a similarly shaped level vale in the centre and a ring of mountains around it. The plains in the Valley measure about eighty-four miles in length, from South-east to North-west, while its width varies from twenty to twenty five miles. Stein and Drew estimated the area comprised in this part at 1800 to 1900 square miles. At present, the area of Kashmir valley, which is wholly on the Indian side, is estimated to be 6131 square miles. Around this great plain rise mountain ranges which enclose it in an almost unbroken ring. The

slopes of the mountains descending towards the central plain are drained by numerous rivers and streams, all of which join the Jhelum within the Kashmir plain. The side valleys in which these tributaries flow add much ground to the cultivated area of the country, several of them being of considerable length and width. Even the forests and the higher contours add their share to the economical wealth of the country. The valleys extend rich alpine pastures close up to the line of perpetual snow. In the great mountain chain which encircles the country, there is but one narrow gap left, near the north-west end of the valley. There the Jhelum after combining whole drainage of Kashmir flows out by the gorge of Baramulla of its course towards Pakistan. The earlier routes to Kashmir from various sides like Jammu by Budil to Srinagar, Jammu from Bhimber, Rajauri and Pir Panchal to Srinagar from Jhelum by Poonch to Srinagar, Mari to Srinagar, and Gilgit via Astor to Srinagar, were all closed after the state's accession to India. However, Jammu to Srinagar and Srinagar to Leh remain open. Presently, Kashmir is linked up with India through the only route passing through Kud, Batote, Ramban and Banihal to Srinagar.

This perfect and isolated geographical personality of Kashmir by itself attracts most of the people, within and without for a source of spiritual inspiration. A geographical or physical personality manifests itself into its religious personality which is usually as distinct as that of the former. Religious personality of a nation is reflected through not by religious customs, superstitions alone but by the theory and the religious behavior of the people. It is true that the religious theory and behavior contradict each other, while dealing most of the societies in the world, yet any social structure reveals, by and large, a sum total of a religious personality. Islamic theory may remain the same in Saudi Arabia and Kashmir, yet the practice of it in these societies may considerably differ. Kashmir is no exception to the rule because religious personality is caused by the environment that suits the temper of religion and vice versa.

That is why, in Kashmir, since times immemorial, people were guided and are guided to believe in the theory of Monism—the existence of one God. If we concede that the Jewish history of Kashmir existed sometimes we have to accept that not only prophets, seers, saints, purohitas and Brahmins were attracted to Kashmir but also concede that from the beginning of our history the concept of Tawheed was propagated in the valley. Dr. Aziz Ahmad says, "Whether a Kashmiri Musalman or a Hindu or Pandit or

anybody else, all of them believe in the concept of Monism. I have not experienced any Hindu or Pandit who would believe in the plurality of gods—two, three or innumerable or thirty five crores like Hindus in other parts of India, particularly Hindus of Mathura, Kashi, Banaras, Haridwar etc. There are Hindus who worship sun, water or the idols. However, the Pandits of Kashmir invariably believe in one God. This is reflected through Saivite philosophy, known as Trika which is so called because it accepts triad as most important. The Triad consisting of Siva, Sakti and Anu or again of Siva, Sakti and Nara or lastly, of the goddesses Para, Apra and Paratapara is recognized. It explains three modes of knowledge of reality—non-dual (abheda), non-dual-cum-dual (Bheda-abheda) and dual (bheda). According to the belief, “tradition of the Kashmir Saivas, all Sastras which are but thoughts expressed as speech, originally existed as unuttered thought and experience of the Supreme Deity.”

The Buddhist history of Kashmir is very obscure—scanty references are provided by Kalhana. Further, Buddhist philosophy is silent about God, yet Kalhana attributes the following verses to it:

“Know that Bodhisattvas are certain beings, who since (coming of) the blessed ‘Lord of the world’s (Buddha have freed themselves in this world from the (five) afflictions”, and then it says,

“They being bent on supporting all beings, do not feel anger even towards the sinner, but in patience render him kindness and are bound to bring about their own final enlightenment (Bodhi)”.

Kashmir, thus, in its environment or physical personality and isolation invited the great religions to flourish. Kalhana is biased with regard to Jewish and Buddhist history of Kashmir, by not mentioning anything about the former and dealing the latter in scanty but sympathetic way. This is marked and noticed by M.A Stein also when talking on Buddhism in Kashmir he writes in his introduction to Kalhana’s *Rajtarangini*:

“It is curious to note that Kalhana displays a friendly attitude towards Buddhism throughout the whole of his chronicle. A long series of kings, from Asoka down to his own time, receives his unstinted praise for the Viharas and Stupas they founded for the benefit of the Buddhist creed. Similar foundations by private individuals are recorded with the same attention”.

However, Stein accepting Kalhana’s partiality for Buddhist cult and

traditions believes that it had for centuries before Kalhana’s time existed in Kashmir peacefully. He writes:

“As far as the laity was concerned, they were to a great extent amalgamated. His own narrative from the point of view where it reaches historical background, gives ample proof of this. Of almost all royal and private individuals, who are credited with the foundations of Buddhist Stupas and Viharas, it is recorded that they, or at least members of their family, with equal zeal endowed also shrines of Siva or Vishnu. In Kalhana’s own time we note that every contemporary royal personage or minister who is praised for his Buddhist endowments, showed the same pious liberality also in regard to Brahminical temples and establishment”.

Hindu period had still more congenial environment in Kashmir than that of Buddhism for two basic reasons. The Saivite philosophy, dominated the laity and the superstitious tradition attached to the Hindu philosophy. Hindu Philosophy, in the ancient Kashmir resulted into the Brahmanic superiority and even Kalhana is proud to claim himself one of them. Stein writes, “Kalhana’s family was Brahmanic by caste—Sanskrit learning of the type displayed in the *Rajtarangni* has, in Kashmir, as elsewhere in India, been always cultivated chiefly if not exclusively, by Pandits of Brahmanic descent. Kalhana betrays in more than one passage the conscious pride of the ‘gods on earth’ and his full sympathy with Brahminical self-assertion. We have besides the direct testimony of Jonaraja who refers to Kalhana with the epithet *dvija*”.

Saivism, which in the ultimate concept of the divine or the spiritual, tends to be closer to the Islamic concept of Tawheed, had its origin to the very physical personality of Kashmir. P.N.K Bamzai, substantiates this formulation in the words, “Kashmir from the earliest times, seems to have been the home of the great division of Hindu religion, Saivism. Situated in the very heart of the Himalayas and possessing beautiful valleys, springs, rivers, lakes, and snow clad mountains, it seemed to be the land associated with all the mythological stories of Siva and his consort Parvati. The winter when all plant life is dead and the trees are shorn of their leaves, the crisp and life giving spring when nature slowly comes to life; and the luscious green summer when all round there is plenty and prosperity, were dramatic representation of Siva the destroyer, Durga the creator and Parvati the preserver. Amongst such divine surroundings, the great rishis in their quiet hermitages like that of Vasagupta at Harvan perfected a philosophy

of a high order. Although Kashmir Saivism reached its highest peak in the eighth and ninth centuries AD its origin is attributed to earlier times by some historians but some treat it to have originated in Kashmir.

Thus Kashmir, during the Hindu period or what is termed as the Hindu period, is considered to be land of Parvati—religion of the goddess. Nature is bountiful to the Valley—its running water, water falls, cascades, cataract drizzles, cloudbursts, rains, stream foundations, hills, rivulets, brooklets, rivers, floods, whirlpools, lakes, mountains and grassy lands etc. Therefore, Parvati came to exist as a goddess who has reverence because she is the remover of obstacles. Kalhans—the poet historian sang:

“May Parvati the wife of the lord of what moves and of what is immovable, ward off harm—she is whose half the adorable one, whose conduct observed (by all) took up his residence after leaving the wonder, his whole retinue, though (otherwise) ever-trusted, the king, the nobles (or snakes), the age worn noble bull, and the humpbacked

If the tradition to call Kashmir during Hindu period as land of Parvati is properly examined, it would be too mythological to call it so. It is rather be proper to say that it was the land for Parvati. Kashmir is considered to be the universal soul and expect to be absorbed in it according to Buhler. So Parvati being part thereof, a preserver, not the creator. Durga is the creator. Consequently, the superb Kashmir was created only to accommodate Parvati the preserver. At this date that Kashmir, its superb climate, charming scenery, natural appeal, amphitheatre of mountains slimmering with snow, pyramids of the Sun's radiance, luminous spirals and fleeting pillars of loveliness offering to the immortal gods is preserved. This is the source of its attainment and achievement.

The dawn of Islam in Kashmir, neither turned Jewish, Buddhist nor Hindu tradition upside down nor distorted any of them but absorbed in itself. This absorption, however, converted the land of Kashmir from land of Holy trees, Sapha—the Hebrew influences, through Stupa and land of Parvati to that of Peera Wier i.e. (land of Peers). This, however, mean any conflict or contradiction but a compromise of everything new and progressive. Personally, I hope the change to Islam is still in the genesis of Kashmir.

is by itself source to religion. Spiritualization of nature is the source of many great poets superbly to Wordsworth. To him nature is alive and vibrant. It has a life to feel joy and love. To him nature is not a mere arrangement of form and colour, it is permeated and pervaded by the life which absorbing flowers of Kashmir, its trees, mountains, lakes, rivers, plains, paddy fields, and all that is in the valley—the spirit is everywhere in Kashmir as in the words of Wordsworth:

“...that knows no insulated spot,
...no harm, no solitude, from link to link,
...culates, the soul of all the worlds”.

In moments of beautiful vision the poet can intuitively realize this all in the eternal spirit:

“...I have felt
...presence that disturbs me with joy
...elevated thoughts, a sense sublime

“...something far more deeply interfused”.

It is the sentiment of the poet—the sentiment of the laity, the sentiment of the religions will be far greater than the words of the poet. The sentiment of the religions, the laity and the clergy will be in the form of devotion between him and his God. That is why we find Kashmiris believe in saints will aid if men will call”. According to them a dead saint is more efficacious than a living priest. Lawrence writes, “Kashmiris are very foreigners, ‘Pir Parast’, that is saint worshippers and the epithet is preserved. All the veneration in the Kashmiri character comes out as devotion when a man approaches a shrine. Low obeisances are made and with the Kashmiri draws near the doorway and smears his throat and forehead with the holy dust of the sacred precincts. No man will dare pass a shrine without a ‘back’. Sir Aurel Stein speaks of the Kashmiris having been long a gens religiosissima and says that, to this day, they are far more religious than are most Indian peoples. Though there is a change during the few decades, yet the basic structure of the laity and the clergy remains the same. The tradition of Kashmir to this date remains unchanged and that religious places from ancient Kashmir have come down to us as the holiest of their own. For centuries past, Kashmir has been considered the holiest of the holy places. For, according to ancient traditions,

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almost every hill and mountain, every lake and river in Kashmir, has a divine origin, writes Kaumudi, "the Kashmir hills and mountains, lakes and rivers, according to legends and Mahatmyas, are the sacred abodes of Nagas and heavenly figures thereby serving as media for the fulfillment of the pious mission i.e. the washing away of the sins of the faithful".

Kaumudi further illustrates, "The Vitasta, the present day Jhelum, is believed to contain within its waters all that is holy in the world, like the sacred Ganges brought down from the heaven and lost in the wilderness of Shiva's matted locks, and then falling again in a foundation from his head to the earth below. Indeed the land came to be known as the Reshi-Bhumi or the land of the sages, Shardapitha or the "eternally pure seat of the goddess Sharda".

Kashmir thus possesses innumerable holy shrines and divine heights and streams, attracting pilgrims from all parts of India and from all sections of the people. But while Amarnath, the holiest of the trinity, forms the most important pilgrimage in Kashmir, there are several other sacred shrines and hollow caves associated with the name of some sacred god or the other, still the source of attraction and inspiration to millions in the land".

Thus upto date we find the religious places in Kashmir available in abundance and respected by all. From Jewish history we have Tomb of Moses, in Booth, Bandipore, Tomb of Jesus, in Rozabal Khanyar, and from Buddhist tradition we have Buddhist Monastery, Hemis (Leh)—to talk of only some. From Hindu tradition we have the following existing religious places:

Amarnath, Temple at Tulmul or Khirbawani, Trosandhya or Sundabrari, Takar in Handwara, Rudhra Sandhya, Vasuknag, Pavar-sandhya, Sata-Rishi, Spring at Halmatpura, Tatadan (Shopian), Kon-Nag, Harmukh, Dyaneshwar, Bumzu, Suyam or Swayambhu, Priyag, Thermal spring (Wuyan) Tsuhar-nag, Helder (Manasbal)

Temples: Temple at Buniar, Linga at Shiri, Temple at Fatehgarh, Narayan Thal, Temple at Tapar, temple at Mattan, Shankar Acharaya, Narpirasthan.

Hassan, great Kashmiri Muslim historian provides a list of 46 Hindu Shrines or worship houses and names of twelve temples. However, most of the historians place the cave of Amarnath as the highest Hindu reverential place. Even the Hindu laity and the clergy or the community as a whole

treat it most sacred and respectful. Let us examine its geography, philosophy and sanctity before we study the spread of Islam and its religious places and their continuity in the religious heritage of Kashmir.

Amarnath

Most sanctified Tritha of Kashmiri Panidts and that of Indian Hindus is Amarnath.

Kalhan mentions the Tritha as the Amburnath. There is reference to it in Kalhana's Rajtarangni, while discussing King Nara, who reigned from 1048-1008 BC. It is mentioned in the footnotes to famous cave of Amarnath, situated at a considerable altitude, 75° 33' longitude and 34° 13' latitude. In the cave Amaresvara is believed to have manifested himself to the gods who entreated him for protection against death. The god is worshipped in a lingashaped ice block.

For a description of the area, one would treat it a high peak situated about ten miles east-south-east of the Zojila, marking the point where the range, forming the eastern boundary of Kashmir branches from the main chain. This range runs almost due south until it reaches the southern most head waters of the Jhelum. It then turns to the north-west and at the Banihal pass joins on to Pir-Panchal range.

At its northern end and close to the great snowy peak, is the Tritha of Amarasvara or Amarnatha known by Kalhana's name as Amburnath. Even Stein treats both Ganga Lake on mount Harmukhta and Amarnatha as the most popular of Kashmirian pilgrimage places. Its yatra in the month of Savana attracts many thousands of pilgrims, not only from Kashmir, but from all parts of India. Since the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India, the State Government, as their predecessors or kings, spend lakhs of rupees on the welfare of the pilgrims to and fro the cave. The goal of the pilgrims is the cave situated at a considerable altitude and formed by a huge fissure on the south side of a snowy peak 17,300 feet high. In this cave there is a large block of transparent ice formed by the freezing of the water which oozes from the rock. It is worshipped as a self-created linga and is considered the embodiment of Siva Amaresvara.

According to Stein, scanty references made about this Tirtha in the Rajtarangni and the Nilmata, it appeared doubtful whether it could have enjoyed in old times quite such great celebrity as now. However, it may be

mentioned that more distant past seems to the new, the most significant era. Jonaraja relates a visit to this sacred site paid by Sultan Zainul-Abidin, Mahatma Literature grants Amaresvara due attention. The pilgrims route described in great details by the Amarnatha-Mahatma ascends the eastern branch of the Lidar or Lidari.

The celebrated cave of Amarnath is visited by thousands of Hindu pilgrims from Kashmir and other parts of India on the full moon day of the month of Sawan (July-August) every year. According to the belief, the self-formed ice linga, the emblem of Siva, waxes and wanes with the moon. The cave is at the distance of 91 miles, divided into eight stages from Srinagar—they are Avantipora, Anantnag, Mattan, Pahalgam, Chandanwari, Wawjan, Panchantarani and Amarnath. The last four stages are hilly and the region destitute of human beings. Even trees are not found in the area and shelter is not available. The thunderstorms, hailstorms and heavy rains not only cause inconvenience to the pilgrims but even causes loss of human life.

On the 11th day of the bright fortnight of Sawan all pilgrims gather at Pahalgam. Next day, i.e. 12th all of them march toward the Tirtha in the style of a caravan. There are shops or Bazar, a Canvas Town established at each stage of the journey and so on. The procession receives austerity because all people recite shlokas and verses from Ramayana or Bhagvadgita. Pt. Anand Koul says that the caravan reminds us "of a long past age when the Rishis migrated to Kashmir to practice austere penances, and of the fact that through all the centuries as now religion has been the over-mastering passion of the Hindu race.

The pilgrimage is a compact procession both for its austerity and safety. The route leading to the Tirtha is so uneven and often visited by snowstorms or rain storms that it is safe to march together. Many perish on the way and the higher casualty rate is with the Sadhus who are usually ill-clad and the old or the old women. The State Government looks after the welfare of the pilgrims by way of issuing rations and medical aid—this process is in practice since Gulab Singh. Since long the route leading to the cave has been improved and to look after the pilgrims, the Tehsildar of Pahalgam, one Magistrate, one Medical Officer, police contingents are usually incharge of the pilgrim camps. New sheds and barracks are constructed at Chandanwari, Wawjan and Panchtarni. On the way the pilgrims are supposed to bathe at many places.

The prescribed places at which the pilgrims were supposed to a bath have now been reduced. The present practice is followed by rare persons amongst the Sadhus who accompany the Chadi or holy mace of Lord Shiva. The pilgrims, no doubt, assemble at Pahalgam, where mostly, they reach by any convenient road transportation. The trek on foot begins from Chandanwari because no vehicular traffic is available beyond that stage. However, in future the state of things is likely to change.

There is another route that leads to the Amarnath Cave. The route moves through the dens of Sonamarg near Baltal. It is less by nearly 20 miles than the one via Pahalgam. Upto Baltal, the Highway to Ladakh is usually well maintained; especially since Chinese invasion it secured significance. From Baltal to Amarnath there is a distance of only 12 miles—which also has been improved by constructing a road. The route as such is easier and safer than the one via Pahalgam.

Having visited, last autumn, one of the Hindu Trithas at Dyaneshwar in Bandipore, with an Australian, we were not convinced that there existed any stone udders of a cow. When the Australian enquired of me if there were any images in the cave, I unhesitatingly denied having any but I revealed to him my impression. I said that faith is deep rooted in man and religion natural to him. Each having his own faith and hence every Hindu must observe all the images he believes in and find them in the cave. The reason is simple. The place at Amarnath is so calm, so serene and attractive that anybody who has a common sense finds a spirit moving everywhere around it. The religious personality of Kashmir lies in this physical personality in the manner as Augustine puts it in the heavenly city, "while it sojourns on earth, calls citizens out of all nations and gathers together a society of pilgrims in all languages, not scrupling about diversities, in the manners, laws, and institutions whereby earthly peace is secured and maintained" and that these diversities of Pandits, Muslims, Sikhs and others in Kashmir are preserved as long as Kashmiris are united in the service of God on these shrines. Tirthas, Mosques, Dargahs and Astans amidst the environment governed by an absolute spirit.

So far we have examined various religious places and their environmental significance and we now intend to deal with such places which are respected by Muslims in the Valley. Islam made its way into Kashmir, says Stein, not by forcible conquest but by persuasion and gradual conversion, for which the incoming of foreign adventurers both from south and from

Central Asia had prepared the ground. Adoption of Islam by the great mass of the population began towards the close of Hindu rule and became an accomplished fact during the later half of fourteenth century. The conversion thus, "did neither affect the independence of the country nor at first materially change its political and cultural conditions. The administration remained as before in the hands of the traditional official class, the Brahmins for whom a change of religion presented no advantage and who accordingly retained their inherited status, together with its literary traditions." The conditions as such are indicated by the frequent references found in Jonaraja's and Srivara's chronicles to Brahmins holding high official posts under the early Sultans. That Sanskrit remained for a considerable period after the end of Hindu rule the medium of official communication. Thus even after the conversion to Islam the Kashmiris retained what they had inherited from their past—they carry it even to date. GMD Sufi rightly remarks that the Kashmiri is essentially mystical and imaginative, those who have known him intimately and studied him closely will readily admit it. His environment has made him so. Huge snowy peaks, flowing silvery streams and sublime solitudes have induced this frame of mind. We find that while Kashmir was land of Parvati in ancient India and later Rishi Bhumi finally after conversion to Islam became 'Pir Waer'—i.e. the place of pirs, saints, and the virtuous.

Consequently, the spread of Islam, changed Kashmir to the phase which may be treated a process of Islamization of what had been inherited from the past. This, however, did not create a social structure devoid of earlier customs and traditions. Religion, therefore, to Kashmiris, is not what Islam genuinely preaches, but according to Lawrence it is an elaborate social code prescribing the conduct of daily life the sanctions of which are social and not religious. That is why Kashmiri Muslims is more 'Pir Parast' and 'Astan Parast'. Muslims have retained the characteristic of being Pir Parast from traditions of the past when they were Hindus. It is in this regard that Lawrence treats Kashmiris in their hearts as Hindus and thinks that the religion Islam is too abstract to satisfy their superstitious cravings and accordingly, they turn from the mean priest and mean mosque to the pretty shrines of carved wood and roof bright with the iris flowers where the saints of past time lie buried. In view of this fact General Zia-ul-haq of Pakistan, in April 1979, called Kashmiris as Brahmins without subscribing to the view that Brahmins are intelligent. Thus all veneration in the Kashmiri character comes out as the Musalmans approach a shrine. That is why

Alam Khundmiri, once while in the University of Kashmir as a visiting professor, remarked that Kashmiris are more seen in shrines than in mosques. Hassan, great son of Kashmir, has provided detailed accounts of as many as two hundred and fifty shrines of Syeds and names the shrines of four hundred eight Rishis. Further he mentions the names of burial places of shrines of fifty sheikhs or learned saints and thirty seven names of religious scholars. He provides the accounts of nearly hundred three personalities who were infirm or invalid with saintly attitudes and intuitions. He gives the details of about fifty eight sacred relics available in Kashmir. He then accounts for eighty-five Persian poets and their shrines are respected by the Musalmans and most of them are thronged by people on either annual or bi-annual functions. Muslims, therefore, at present have exceeded in number of religious places as compared to non-Muslims. To provide the names of all small and big shrines is beyond the scope of this article and hence certain important places are given as provided by W.R Lawrence:

Hazratbal Dargah, Shah-i-Hamdan Mosque, Jamia Mosque, Shrine of Nur-uddin at Charaisharief, Ziarat of Dastgir at Khanyar, Ziarat of Mukhdoom Sahib Hariparbat, Khaja Nakshbandi and Rishis at Ashmuqam, Baba-Rishi Gulmarg, Baba Shakuruddin and many more.

Let me, therefore examine Dargah Hazratbal as the single most significant religious place in Kashmir, which having made and unmade many a time the history of Kashmir.

Lawrence gives the following account about the Dargah Hazratbal:

"The shrine of Hazratbal is beautifully situated on the shores of the Dal Lake, and a great fair is held there at the beginning of March, to which thousands resort from all parts of the valley bringing with them the flags of renowned saints. The sanctity of Hazratbal is due to the presence of one of the Prophet^{SAW}'s hairs which was brought to Kashmir from Medina by Saiyed Abdullah in 1111 AH. Saiyed Abdullah sold the hair to a merchant, Nur Dia, for one lakh of rupees and Nur Din exhibited the relic in Srinagar. The crowd was so great that many persons were crushed to death, and the ruler of the country wisely ordered that the hair should be kept in some open place. Four other shrines in Srinagar boast that they possess a hair of the Prophet^{SAW}—Kalashpura, Andwara, Sowra and Dangarpura—and some believe that the hair shown at the shrine of Nabi, Pighamber^{SAW} in Khrim by the Lidder Valley is genuine. The hairs are exhibited six times, in the year, at the various shrines, but the villagers all go to the Hazratbal Shrine".

Many historians relate the history of the sacred relic in the Dargah of Hazratbal. It is said that one Syed Abdullah, who was wealthy person and remained a custodian for the Prophet^{SAW}'s grave, was a rebel against commands of the King of Rome. Accordingly, he was banished from Medina Munawara. The Governor of Medina, in accordance with commandments from the King banished the Syed to India in the months of 1024 AH. On his departure from Medina he carried with him three sacred relics—one the hair of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) and his Turban and thirdly the saddle of the horse used by Hazrat Ali; He reached India during the reign of Shah-i-Jehan, the Mughal Emperor. The Mughal King received him cordially and as a mark of respect allotted him a jagir at Bejapur. Later on his death, his sons favoured Daro-Shikow and their jagir was confiscated. The sons had to visit Shah-i-Jehanabad to get their jagir released—their incomes were limited and consequently pawned the sacred relic against a heavy debt, to Khaja Nur-Din, a Kashmiri businessman who lived at Urdu bazaar in Shah Jahanabad. The release orders of the jagir could not be possible easily and early—they had no capacity to return the debts and consequently the sacred relic was willed to Nur-uddin. Nur-uddin treated it as a boon and testified the debts to have been paid off. Nur-uddin decided to return to Kashmir along with the relic. Before he could reach the destination the spies conveyed the news to the King Alamgir. While Nur-uddin had reached Lahore, where he was arrested and along with his servant Ghulam Hassan, who looked after the safety of the sacred relic, was presented before the court. The King ordered after the Deedar of the sacred relic that it be kept at the shrine of Muinuddin Chishti (RA). The sacred relic had been in the precincts of the Durgah at Ajmer only for nine days, when it is believed the King had a dream and the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) directed the king to return the sacred relic to Kashmir and the commands through the dream were complied with. The servant of Nuruddin, on return from Ajmer reached Lahore where he found that Nuruddin had passed away. Accordingly, he set on journey to Kashmir along with the sacred relic and the dead body of Nuruddin.

As soon as the news broke in Kashmir, the lovers of the Prophet, (peace be upon him) and Muslim laity clergy and the learned men reached Hirpur near shopian to receive the sacred relic. The procession, in all its ecstasy reached Srinagar and sacred relic was placed in the shrine of Hazrat-Moinuddin Naqushbandi. The sacred relic was removed and placed in the Bagh-i-Sadiq Khan, present site of Dargah, on the ground that it had vast

area to accommodate the people who used to come for Deedar. On its first observance at the Khanqah-i-Naquishband, by Sheikh Mohammad Radhu, who lead procession to Hirpur, many people died in stampede—so the shift in venue was necessitated. The Mughal King donated three villages in favour of the shrine to meet the expenditures on its maintenance.

Sheikh Mohammad Radhu remained as the custodian of the shrine at Hazratbal till his death and he functioned as the man to hold the sacred relic for the observance of the public. Later the task was assigned to the son-in-law of Nuruddin named Bilaqi Bandy—since then uptil now it is the Bhanday's who inherit this function. In the beginning its observance took place twice a year and now shown six times a year, but on ten days in all. Four other shrines in Srinagar claim that they possess hair of the Prophet but all the people in Kashmir respect the Durgah at the highest. Consequently, the Dargah at Hazratbal enjoys the central position—attracting all Musalmans from all corners of the valley—be it Karnah or Gurez or Pahalgam or any other place in the far-off jungles—all pay a visit at least once a year. At present, the visit to this shrine is scheduled by every visitor to the valley.

Islam in Kashmir is tradition-oriented and governed by physical environment. Accordingly, some criticize the Muslims of the Valley for not being genuinely Muslims. G.M.D Sufi wants Kashmiris to be reformed on this score and instill in them the real spirit of Islam i.e. Tawheed. Analyzing and commenting on the Dargah Hazratbal, he writes:

"The type of Islam that prevails in Kashmir was commented upon (Supra Chapter I, pp. 19-20) by Mirza Haider Dughlat, whose stay in the Valley lasted for ten years from 1541-1551 AC. In fact, puritan like as Akhwan, resident of the present day al-Riyad in Najd, Saudi Arabia, would hardly believe that a number of the practices of the Kashmiri Musalman are at all Islamic. Perhaps, to him, Islam in Kashmir would be but a definitely deformed version of the real teachings of the Prophet^{SAW} of Arabia. As Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali points out, the Buddhist worship of relics has insidiously crept into India's Islam. It is nowhere as prominent as in Kashmir. On the occasion of the exhibition of the Prophet^{SAW}'s hair there—which, according to a *tete-a-tete* was thrown into the fire by Azad Khan, an Afghan governor, in order to test its genuineness—crowds of Kashmiris, assembled, are seen weeping and wailing like the Jews, before the wailing wall of the Aqsa in Baitul Muqadas (Jerusalem). Again the mystic teachers

known as the Pirs, ascetic and holy men have almost created a priesthood and hereditary sacred caste. Necromancy and a belief in omens and magic have gained ground, in spite of the Quran protest against them. The Tavis and the ganda have nowhere such vogue as in Kashmir. Pure monotheism and the moral fervor of a society based on social equality has in practice nowhere receded more into the background.

In Kashmir, mostly, a Muslim shrine exists with a Hindu shrine—Shah Hamdan along with Kali Devi near Makhdoom Sahib Shrine is situated Hindu temple of Sarika Devi. The ancient chronicles feed the idea that even at Sudrabal and Hazratbal ancient Hindu religious places existed. In ancient legend related by Kalhana represented the spring at Sudrabal near Hazratbal as an avatara of the Sodara Naga worshipped originally near the sacred site of Bhutesvara below mound Harmukhta. Stein further exploring the relation from Sudrabal to Hazratbal writes:

“Close to the mosque of Sudrabal and by the lake shore are two pools fed by perennial spring. These, according to a local tradition, were in old times visited by numerous pilgrims. Now all recollection of this Tritha has been lost among the Brahmins of Srinagar. But the name of portion of the village area, Battapor, points to a former settlement of Battas or Purohitas. It is curious, too, that we find only half a mile from the village the Ziarat of Hazratbal, perhaps the most popular of all Mohammaden shrines in the Valley. It is supposed to be built over the remains of the miracle working Pir Dastagir Sahib”. It is possible” Stein questions “that the presence of the rather ubiquitous saint at this particular spot had something to do with the earlier Hindu Tirtha”.

It would be interesting to mention here that due to this complexity of religious personality of Kashmir, having cognizance to the geographical or physical personality, all aspects of a Kashmiri are intertwined and mixed up. Thus the shrine whether of Muslims or Hindu is a place of not only the worship or the communion between the Kashmiri and his God but also platform for politics, economic welfare a social and festival gathering. This can be illustrated in many ways.

Since, 1931, though one can study past too, the Muslim shrine in particular became a platform to fight against the Dogra rule. The freedom struggle in Kashmir, which dawned in the month of July, 1931, started at the shrine of Shah Hamdan Khanqahi-maula, when one Mr. Abdul Qadeer (or Kabir) had a devastating speech against the Dogra Rule in Kashmir. A

criminal case was instituted against Mr. Abdul Qadeer. However, proceedings could not run a chance in an open court. The authorities, therefore, shifted the venue of the court to the premises of the Central Jail and the court was scheduled to sit on 13th July 1931. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who remained main actor all along the freedom struggle, a man from the shrine, reciting the verses of the Holy Quran and the verses from Alama Iqbal delivered a fiery speech in a mosque at Batamaloo. It is reported that he stated before the public, “Be prepared to be sacrificed for the sake of helpless (Mr. Qadeer) man in the prison and that he was being prosecuted for them. As a matter of fact all Kashmiriologists agree that most of the speeches made by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other leaders came from the political-religious platforms of the shrines—whether it be Jamia Masjid, the shrine of Shah Hamadan at Khanqahi Maula or Dastagir sahib or Idd-gah or anywhere from a Mosque. During the dawning period of struggle, on 9th July 1931, the Governor of Kashmir read out a message from His Highness to His subjects, in the exhibition grounds, promising to enquire into grievances pertaining to majority community. Even this message was formally rejected in a mammoth meeting held in Jamia Masjid on 10th July 1931.

The Sheikh, who dominated the political scene for half a century (1931-1982) was both a political leader, a passion for common people, and a religious forerunner. People sought blessings from him. He had allegiance to the Durgah at Hazratbal. He delivered his most important and historical statements at the shrine from time to time. The Sheikh rebuilt it in a grand distinctive architectural design as it exists today. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, true to this tradition, renovated and rebuilt the shrines of Mukhdoom Sahib, Hamdan Sahib, Dastagir Sahib and that of the shrine of Sheikh Nuruddin Wali. The politics of Kashmir is thus, the politics of the shrine of the leader. It is in tradition a cult of the shrine, and cult of a leader.

The National Conference (earlier the Muslim Conference) and its leadership captured the central position by associating itself with the shrine at Hazratbal—it is this shrine that gave him courage and consolidated his party to fight for freedom upto 1947—the freedom that was unknown to the people of Kashmir for many centuries. The freedom that ensued may be disputed at present, but the fact that Kashmiri saw an awakening in the post-1947 era, is an historical fact and a miracle of the shrine.

In the post-1947, till today, the shrine in Kashmir, particularly the Dargah at Hazratbal, saw terrible upheavals not only in its architectural design but in the form of struggle for power. The political history of the shrine witnessed not only the great statements and confrontation of the leaders of the National Conference, particularly the Sheikh's struggle both for power and identification of Kashmir, but the shrine caused the down fall of many governments. Whether religious or the political upheavals, initiation came from the shrine's platform. In a public speech at Hazratbal shrine on Id-i-Milad the Sheikh said as early as 1949. "Today beauty of Kashmir is a source of trouble for us—every powerful government desires its occupation".

Later, the Sheikh's fall in 1953, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's ascendancy to power for ten years, long detention of the sheikh, his freedom at intervals, saw many upheavals at the Hazratbal Dargah. The greatest however, was the theft of the sacred relic on December 27, 1963. It was stolen from old mosque at Hazratbal after breaking open the special room where it used to be lodged. The news of the disappearance of the holy relic spread like wild fire. It caused widespread dismay and anger among the people. Bamzai remarks that it was a preplanned conspiracy. "Apparent from the very fact that within minutes of the occurrence, thousands of black flags were thrust into the hands of the people who came out en masse into the streets and open spaces of Srinagar in defiance of the inclement weather and the rigorous of biting cold and frost".

Who conspired is still unknown but the great intelligence officer's contention is that the conspiracy was hatched by Pakistan. He writes, "From the investigation which we had so far conducted, the interrogation of the large number of the people whom we had listed in the conspiracy as well as from the examination of a large number of top people in Kashmir of all political shades, it was clear that Pakistan through Pir Maqbool Gilani with the assistance of some of his important contacts in Kashmir who had received money for this purposes from Pakistan had arranged the removal of the Moe-e-Muqaddas. This reporting by Mullik has not been accepted by most of the shades of public opinion in Kashmir on the ground that the culprits were not punished who had committed this heinous crime on the instigation of Pakistan. However, whatever are the realities, the fact remains that importance of the shrine on account of the sacred hair is beyond the purview of a common man. It was possibly Nehru who could

understand its importance as reported by Mullik.

The telephone line, as if by magic, revived and the Prime Minister came in the line. This was at about 6 pm. I told him in great excitement that I had recovered the thing. The Prime Minister asked what? I said I had recovered it. He said, "Recovered it, the Moe-e-Muqaddas, I said, "Yes, the Moe-e-Muqaddas". He said, God bless you, Mullik you have saved Kashmir for us. Then I contacted Balbir and asked him to pass on the news to the Home Minister, other Ministers concerned and the press".

The shrine with Moe-e-Muqaddas, was accordingly Kashmir, the land of Pirs, Faqirs, Saints, Purohitas, the laity and the clergy—in short Kashmir in essence and content Kashmir with its physical and religious personality.

The annual fairs at the various shrines, says W. Lawrence, are red letter days in the dull lives of Kashmiri people. Thousands crowd together and spend a day—eating and buying including praying. They spend marketing Kangries, wooden pattens, sweets, glass bangles, necklaces and vegetables at the surroundings of Dargah. Alms flow into the shrine, where the many Khadims fight vigorously over the offerings. Sacred relic is held out by the head priest for the observance of the devotees. According to Lawrence, "people believe that a visit to the shrines will secure the object of their wishes. Sick men will regain health, women will be vouchsafed children". The litigant will win his case, if pilgrimage be made to Dargah or to any other important shrine. The white or red rags are tied to the shrine and are placed there by supplicants for offspring's, and till a child is born the rag is left in its place.

The shrine at Dargah, having central position, usually on all sacred days perform religious exercise called Zikr, while the devotees and the laity are in prayers or observe the sacred relic they sing hymns presently Persian and Kashmiri, the same way as the darvesh or the forerunner dance their heads. The mind according to Lawrence is thrown into the whirlwind, and the dancers fall into a religious ecstasy. The shrine is also used for purposes of an impressive ceremony known as Nafl. Musalmans from all parts of the Valley, in particular the people from Srinagar gather at the Dargah, when scarcity is imminent, or calamities such as earthquake, cholera and drought occur to offer Nafl. There were offered prayers, Nafl and sacrifices at two important occasions since 1977—first on the illness of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah during elections of 1977 and second before

his death while he was on bed. On both the occasions a number of sheep were sacrificed at the Dargah.

The people of Kashmir generally believe that a visit to the shrine will secure the object of their wishes, economic also. Therefore, early in the morning, you find even now-a-days people from all walks of life to pray for their economic welfare or economic gains during the day. Having observed myself, a Musalman leading advocate from Kashmir High Court Bar, descending from the car at about 10 in the morning near the shrine, folding his hands pointing to Dargah, reciting verses silently and then moving to his days work. Having personally observed the politician on the platform of the Dargah, early morning on the side of the head priest, businessman on its threshold to pray for economic gains, a smuggler to pray for the safety of his goods across the destined goals, the bureaucrat for promotions and pleasure of his officers and finally the lover in company of his beloved to pray for binding them in wedlock. Most Kashmiris whether Hindu or Musalman, bow before the gates of the Dargah while passing through it. The research scholars before submitting their thesis to the University of Kashmir, along with their thesis visit the shrine. Actually so to say Kashmiri Musalmans by tradition and not by faith believe in 'Wasalat'. This may be to some un-Islamic, yet he not only believes in it but practices the same. According to GMD Sufi, it is detrimental to the progress of a society—he writes:

"This habit of the 'Wasila' is I am afraid, responsible for the habit of Sifarish' in life, so rampant throughout the valley. His saps self-reliance. The "Sifarishi" is more anxious to seek the wasila than to work hard to improve his prospects".

Kashmiri non-Muslims, particularly Pandits are no exception to the rule. They do not only pray for their gains in life apart from spiritual attainments, like the Muslim counterparts but even bow before all Muslim shrines including Dargah Hazratbal. However, no Musalman with whatsoever tradition bows before a Hindu worship house or a shrine, except at few places.

During last one decade there is a change amongst some Muslim sections in Kashmir due to Islamic revivalism in some Muslim countries. However, the determinial force behind the fundamental approach is that it does not suit the temper of the Kashmiri Musalman.

So far we have been able to examine the religions behind the physical personality of Kashmir and possibly we have been able to strike the balance that Kashmir as it physically stands suits to the temper of many religions. That we Kashmiris experienced and practiced at least three to four religions and passed from one to another peacefully and with tolerance, is a fact of history. However, I am construed to refer to you the sentences in the Jackets of two books one published in India and the other in Pakistan to reveal the present dichotomy particularly religious that confronts an intellectual in Kashmir.

The Jacket of one book published in India invites the attention:

With its hoary mountains, precipitous waterfalls, panoramic valleys, verdant gardens, murmuring brooks, enchanting streams lush greens tiny terraced fields, and gleaming glaciers, Kashmir, the paradise on earth is the Crown Jewel of India".

The Jacket further adds,

"The heaven on earth, Kashmir attracts innumerable tourists and pilgrims because of scenic grandeur, salubrious climate, sacred temples, mosques, monasteries and orchards. The Kashmiri workers are known over the world for their woolen fabrics, silken cloth, ivory work, handicrafts. Kashmir stands unique for its contribution to Indian cultural heritage".

The Jacket of the book on Kashmir published from Pakistan reveals:

"The State has many valleys such as the Kishanganga valley, the Gurez valley, the Astore valley but the most famous of them all, which is also easy of excess and frequented by tourists from all over the world, is the Valley of Kashmir. It is the biggest valley of its kind anywhere in the world and has been described by Imperial Gazetteer of India 1990 as 'an emerald set in pearls. It has also been called 'Jewel of Asia'. The map of Pakistan is incomplete without the star in its crescent".

The Jacket of the book further adds,

"A moving records of the bloodiest of all struggles for freedom launched by Indo-Pakistan Muslims anywhere—it is not a history of kings but of the people—only a Kashmiri speaking Muslim could have the 'feel to write the epic".

Thus, the unfortunate part played by the history of Kashmir is that the Indian intellectual finds Kashmir standing unique for its contribution to

Indian cultural heritage and Pakistan intellectual treats it a source of Pakistan's ideological and nation-perfection. That is why I believe that Kashmir stands magnificently possessing essentially self-isolated geographic and self-identified religious personalities.

ROUTES THROUGH AGES

During recent months, there has been a public debate in the valley regarding the "Banihal Cart road", presently the national highway linking the valley with the rest of India. The debate, whether in the public or in the state or central sets of governments or in print or other media, was caused due to the untimely rains bringing landslides, erosions and devastation of the forty year old national highway. The blockade of the road, in its consequence, caused great public inconvenience. Many theories were afloat in the public during the blockage. Some people, both technical and non-technical thought that the national highway has lost its life and as such we have to seek some alternative. Some thought its deterioration to be the consequence of negligence and callousness of the operators, executors and the planners of the National Highway. There were, however, very few people, who subscribed to the view that the National Highway deteriorated due to heavy pressures on it. Ever since 1947 traffic that continued to exploit it has been perpetually on increase and hence its deterioration is not only normal but natural. Heavy army vehicles, fruit loaded trucks, full trucks of commodities as the necessities of the life for the people of Kashmir and Ladakh and then mobility of people from this mountain clad valley to the Indian plains. Till 1947, only the rich and the poor Kashmiri coolie could visit the Punjab plains and their roll was very small. Since 1947, it has been perpetually on an increase with the employees of 'Darbar Move' as well. Some people concede to the view that once you destroy nature, it destroys man. The Highway was perpetually under the irritation of bulldozers of the Beacons and accordingly, the mountains gave way. Still there is a theory, which questions the very linkage of the valley with the plains of India—it directly questions the accession itself. The theory is that accession is unnatural and has to be broken some day or the other. Whatever, may be the theories, the fact is that routes to and from Kashmir have from

times immemorial, played a very important role for the people of Kashmir and they have been vital for their existence. In the present times, when a Kashmiri has become, over the years, more dependent to the outside capitalist economy, these routes have become more vital for their existence.

The vale of Kashmir, though surrounded by snow-clad mountains since times immemorial, had different routes to enter and exit. Rajtarangni also provides details of certain routes and foreign travelers also give descriptions of the routes through which they visited the valley, including Hiuen Tsiang, Ou-Kong, Alberuni and many western travelers. However, Frederic Drew's, and Younghusband's, account of the routes is very elaborate. According to Drew, there were as many as thirty routes to enter Kashmir and to exit from it. From these thirty routes, three models could be prepared. The First Model is prepared when Srinagar, the summer capital of the present J&K State is the centre.

Srinagar to Qazigund, Banihal, Ramban, Kud, Udampur, Jammu—Shopian—Nazim Garhi—Budil—Nar—Chele Panni—Akhnur—Jammu.

—Shopian—Hirpur—Aliabad Saral—Poshiana—Barmagala Thana—Rajouri—Naushara—Saidabad—Bhimher.

—Pattan—Baramulla—Naushara—Uri—Aliabad—Kahuta—Punch—Saira—Biari—Mirpur—Jhelum (In Pakistan).

—Pattan—Baramulla—Naushara—Uri—Chakoti—Hatti—Garhi—Tandali—Raru—Chatar—Kelas—Kohals—Deral—Mari (Mari in Pakistan)

—Pattan—Baramulla—Gingal—Shadra—Kathai—Kanda—Hatian—Muzafferabad—Garhi—Mansera—Abbotabad (Abbotabad in Pakistan)

—Bandipore—Tragabal—Kunzalwan—Chagam—Gurikot (of Astor)—Astor—Harchoo—Duitan—Ramghat—Jagrot—Camp—Minawar—Gilgit.

There was one alternative route to Gilgit from Srinagar to Gurez—Bangla—Mapanun—Burzil—Camp—Das—Gudhai—Nangam Astor—Gilgit. Another route from Srinagar form by Deosai to Skardu, via Bangla, Mapanun, Burzil, Sikhback, Lalpuri, Usar Mar, Karpitu and Skardu also existed. Another route from Srinagar by Dras to Skardu starting via Ganderbal to Baltal, Matyan, Dras, Tashgam, Karkitchu, Gangari, Olting Thang, Tarkuti, Kartakjsho, Tolti, Parkuta, Gol, Kepchung and reaching Skardu. Still one more route in this model i.e. starting from Srinagar to Leh in Ladakh via Ganderbal, Kangan, Gund, Gagangir, Sonmarg, Baltal,

Matayan, Dras, Tashgam, Chanegund and Kargil which can be further carried to Leh. There is one more route from Srinagar to Kishtwar which starts from Srinagar upto Islamabad then proceed on to Wangam, Wankringi, Singpur, Moghal Maidan and then terminate at Kishtwar.

In the second model Leh is the termination of the routes, connecting either Kishtwar or Yarkand. For example, a route leading from Kishtwar by Kargil to Leh and from Zanaskar to Leh, another route which leads from Palampur in Kangra by Kulu to Leh and from Simla by Wangtu and Spiti to Leh was in vogue. From Leh a road by Chorlat terminated at Sakardu. Then some routes passed from Leh by Karakoran to Yakand (summer and winter route) and Leh by Changchenmo to Yarkand (western route) and the same place was a middle route and eastern route. There was one route which started from Leh to Gar and other two starting from Palampur by Changchenmo to Yarkand avoiding Leh.

In the third model Fredric Drew describes five routes which start from present Jammu province and end in the same province. However, their significance rested in their connecting link with the main routes entering into the valley of Kashmir. They are five in number and are cross routes. Firstly one starts at Rajouri and ends into Poonch. Then we have Jammu by Chenani to Kishtwar and by Badarwah to Kishtwar. One more route Madhopur by Badarwah to Kishtwar and then Chamba by Badarwah to Kishtwar was also used for travelling.

Historical isolation of Kashmir, since times immemorial have until quite modern times, isolated its population from the rest of the Indian people. However, sometimes in its history, Kashmir was conquered by foreigners even though it was immuned from foreign invasions due to its geographical position. Many a time it remained under its own sovereignty. Even such isolation and its effects are discussed in Kalhana's Chronicle. In its strategy, Kashmir, witnessed a lot due to these routes. Sometimes it was invaded through north or south. During ancient times, Kalhana records the importance of one route mostly, the one that connects Kashmir from Poonch to present Shopian. Hirpur is the place which occurs frequently in the Rajtarangni. During Avantivarmana's times, his minister Sura transferred watch tower in the locality of Karmavarta, to the fine town called Surapura which he had built himself and which according to Stein is undoubtedly the modern Hurpor. This Hirpor is a place situated in the valley of the Rembara (Rembyar) stream on the route which leads to the passes of the

Pir Panchal, of Dushal and of Rupri. Being the first permanently inhabited place which the traveler meets on the old "Imperial Road" as Stein would call it, after crossing the mountain barrier and only separated by a short defile from the open plain of the Kashmir valley was important. Hurpur had retained uptill the advent of Afghans its importance as a trading and customs stations. Kalhana, while talking about Su'rapura, mentions clearly that Hurpur was the main route of communication in the south during ancient times. Hurpur had a watch station in the south of the valley and Drang, which was another important watch station on the Jhelum Rawalpindi communication line established near Baramulla. During ancient times Dranga was a general name accorded to the watch stations, we find its mention in the Rajtarangni as well as in later chronicles. The establishment of Drangas at the mouth of all routes leading to connect Kashmir with other parts of India had the double purpose of guarding the approaches to the valley and collecting of customs revenue. The Jhelum road from Baramulla onwards started originally from twin towns of Baramulla and Hushkapura—presently they are merged in one. Closed to the western end of the town a rocky ridge, with precipitous slope, runs down into the river bed. According to Stein, at this point, he saw in 1897, an old ruined gateway, which was known to the people as Drang or watch-station at that time. Whether Shopian as the entrance station on the important route of Mughal Road, or Baramulla as the entrance station on the other important route on Jhelum-Pendi route, it goes to the credit of both the towns that they were both not only great trade emporiums but also intellectually alive in the past. Alas, both the towns, Shopian after Moghals and Baramulla after partition of India, lost all that they possessed.

During Sultanate and that of Chak periods in the history of Kashmir, we find most of the battles of war fought between the areas surrounding Shopian. In the north the invasions that at times, but not as much as in the south, were made from Gurez, the Dard valley. Some battles were fought around Baramulla on the route Srinagar to Muzaffarabad. When Babbar the first Mughal tried to annex Kashmir to his Kingdom, his forces under the command of Kochak Beg Azbeki and Sheikh Ali Turki were defeated at Naushara near Baramulla. The Magraes sought help from Humayun to get rid of Kajichak—Humayun allowed Mirza Haider Dughlat to lead an expedition to Kashmir on behalf of the Magraes. He entered Kashmir from Hirpor and Shopian—after dividing Kashmir into his rivals and himself he was killed at the age of 52 near Khanpor, twelve miles from Srinagar, on

the old Mughal road. Similar to these battles, many were fought either around Shopian or between Pattan to Sopore from time to time. During 1947, the Indo-Pak war battle, were mostly fought between Pattan and Uri and in Jammu province around Poonch. To speak about the battles fought around Baramulla and Poonch, I do not suggest that the battles were important for one or the other reason. What I suggest is that these battles showed vital position of both the routes—whether Jhelum Cart Road or Mughal road.

Soon after the fall of Mughal Rule in India and as a consequence in J&K, the Mughal road was rendered out of use. There might have been many reasons but the main contributory factor was that for Afghans, who ruled Kashmir after Mughals, Jhelum cart road was a route of convenience—it connected them well to Kabul. However, when Ranjit Singh, in 1814, invaded Kashmir with 10,000 Sikhs to realize the second installment of eight lakhs of rupees which had been promised to him by Wazir Fath Khan, his thrust was from Badgam by way of Tosse Maidan, while he himself remained at Poonch. Five years later, in 1819, the Sikh army occupied Kashmir, under the command of Diwan Chand accompanied by Raja Gulab Singh, but they entered Kashmir through Shopian. In 1946, AC Gulab Singh entered Kashmir with a Sikh army nominally commanded by Prince Pratab Singh, the son of Maharaja Sher Singh, to restore order on Colonel Mehan Singh's murder in Srinagar. Later when Sikh kingdom of the Punjab fell in the hands of the British, the English transferred J&K to the independent possession of Maharaja Gulab Singh, thus handing over the J&K State to the Dogra rule. During Dogra Rule, the state of J&K was unified as it existed before 1947. However, for the governments the Jhelum Cart road from Baramulla to Mari (in Pakistan) was the main route of communication. Srinagar Jammu Cart road was only a seasonal pedestrian pass but made a continuous communication system—Moghal road.

The census report of India 1941, Volume XXII, J&K, by Capt, R.S Wreford, regarding the two main communication links of the state with British India stated, "The state possesses two excellent roads, running through mountainous country, connecting Srinagar with the rest of India via Rawalpindi and Abbotabad to the east and Jammu and Sialkot to the south. These two roads known respectively as the Jhelum valley road and the Banihal road join at Srinagar to make one continuous road which is the main artery of communications throughout the J&K Province.

Upto the reign of Dogras, out of the earlier discussions, two important things emerge. Firstly, strategically, two routes were significant—Jhelum cart road and Moghal road from Shopian. Though Dogra rulers established Banihal cart road, yet it could not be treated significant. Simultaneously, two towns in the valley were significant strategically, Baramulla on the Jhelum Valley road and Shopian including Hirpur on the Moghal Cart road. The road via Tosse Maidan did not, in its history, gain a strategic importance. The post partition period witnessed the closer of the Jhelum Rawalpindi road, and all other roads on the north. However, in the south, the whole pressure of the communication rested on the Banihal Jammu road abandoning the Moghal road and the link to Punch via Tosse Maidan. Today the pressure on the Banihal cart road and geological deficiencies at Nasheri Nalla creates acute problems for the communications between the valley and the rest of India. The government of J&K and the government of India have, accordingly, only one choice left. The choice is to erect a viable alternative either in the establishment of Moghal road via Shopian or Tosse Maidan route to Poonch. The road from Tosse Maidan to Poonch is militarily more sensitive and government of India may not take any risk. The historical importance of the Toss Maidan route is best illustrated by the fact that it was chosen on two occasions for serious attempts for invading Kashmir. The first attack was made at the Mahmud of Gazani's expedition, during Hindu times, which was brought to a stand still by the 'valorous defence at the castle of Lohara and timely fall of snow. Another attack was encouraged by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, when in 1814 he first attempted to invade Kashmir by this route. Like the first, second invasion also failed. However, the Royal road from Shopian to Poonch may prove to be a viable alternative. At least it can be so in geological sense. Mughal road, according to Mr. Lydekker and Mr. Drew has geologically better position as compared to Jhelum-Pendi and Banihal National Highway to resist any heavy traffic.

Kashmir is such a geographical entity that its communication links with the rest of the world become its air-pipe. Once it is obstructed or broken, people get economically strangled. To the people of Kashmir the routes are life line because the flow of economic relations, trade, necessities of life are dependent on it. Any Govt. worth the name, whether in the state or at the centre must assure the people of Kashmir, establishment of the route or routes, otherwise, the poor is exploited beyond limitations.

RACIAL ADMIXTURE OF THE PEOPLE OF KASHMIR

Race means a group of persons related by common descent, blood or heredity. It is a sub-division of human species, characterized by a more or less distinctive combination of physical traits that are transmitted in descent. It is the group of the tribes of peoples forming an ethnic stock—it is characterized by similarity of descent. Gene Lisktzky believes a race to mean purely physical differences among human beings and adds that they are biologically inherited by the same sort of genetic mechanism that give sweet peas their different colours, shapes and sizes. According to him human race is a synonym for the species but he thinks that in scientific and practical affairs there is difficulty that a scholar faces. He thinks that to identify such smaller groups like English race, the Hopi race, the Jewish race, or even the race of Hapsburg's points to a culture whereas what the race theorists apply is the difference in biology. Kashmiris form a distinctive ethnic stock both by virtue of difference in biology and culture. I am unable to study Kashmiri race in its biological identification for the paucity of literature and inability of clinical studies. There is no need to study it on its cultural identification because it is not in the scope of the topic. My study therefore, is on the basis of migration and settlement of various races in Kashmir, which resulted into racial admixture of the Kashmiris.

The people of Kashmir ethnically do not form a single homogenous group. There had been process of racial admixture in the valley since Kashmir was colonized by Kasyapa. Though, one is not in a position to take an estimate of the specific races corresponding to specific times, yet the history of Kashmir reveals some infiltration of various races into the valley. Present biological features of the people of Kashmir testify that it is racial admixture.

The valley was subjected to several foreign invasions from the North and North-West from very early times. According to MA Stein, with the names of the three Turuska Kings, Huska, Juska and Kanishka, we reach the Terra firma of historical records relating to racial influence in the valley. Kanishka, as identified with the great Kusana or Indo-Scythian ruler of North Western India, reveals that the Kashmiris are ethnically related to Indo-Scythians. There are enough Buddhist traditions—the coins and inscriptions which confirm it. Though Kalhana writes very little regarding these kings, yet he clearly describes them as princes of Turuska or princes of Turkish nationality. The continued existence, which can still be located, of the three places Kanishkapur, Huskapur and Juskapur are associated with these three kings. Kalhana, while dealing with these kings, attributes to them acts of piety, though they were of Turaiska race. These kings lived hundred and fifty years after the great Buddha had obtained Nirvana. Biologically, how much ethnic resemblance Kashmiris might have with them may not be assessed but the fact remains that many of them had settled in Kashmir. The tribe or the tribes of Yue-chi had entered Kashmir and even after the fall of the main dynasty had continued to live in the valley.

The infiltration conducted by Hunas, as recorded by Kalhan, is next to Indo-Scythians. Mihirakula's rule over Kashmir is testified to by Hieun-Tsang as well as by others. Their influence, therefore, cannot be ruled out. Huns and other people from central Asian tribes also known as Bhattas and Mleechas had fallen off from the sacred law. It was on this account that he bestowed a thousand Agraharas on Brahmans from Gandhara land at Vijayesvara. Then finally he bravely gave up his body to the flames on an iron board which was studded with razors, swords, knives and other (sharp instruments)".

Others have described this act to destroy the Khasas, who had obtained pre-dominance when the city (of Nara) had been burnt through the wrath of Naga. Kalhan also states that some religious teachers from Tibet had settled in Kashmir. The Kirtas mentioned in Rajtarangni, is an important group in the lower class, belonged to the Tibto-Burman racial group.

Kashmir also formed a part of the Indian Mauryan Empire, Emperor Asoka is said to have founded the city of Srinagar. Accordingly, the Indian people from other parts of Mauryan Empire migrated and settled in the valley. For example, Abhinavagupta's and Bilhanas forefathers lived in Madhyadesa and Gauda respectively as authenticated by the Kashmiri lan-

guage. Sanskritization of Kashmiri language is considered to be caused by these migrations and infiltrations. Kashmiri language is not Sanskrit in its origin but it has absorbed its words in the past. Most of the theorists on Kashmiri language, or the studies of Grierson, consider the language belonging to Dardic group which itself belongs to Aryan stock. Nevertheless it is Iranian or Indo-Aryan in origin. Aryans, it is believed entered into the valley through Afghanistan. The Aryan influence, therefore, provides us the clue to the racial affinities of the Kashmiri speaking people with people in Afghanistan.

The Nilmate purana, early literary product of the valley records that Kashmir was inhabited by tribes which included the Nagas, the Pisacas, the Darvas, the Abhisaras, the Gandharas, the Juhundaras, the Sakas, the Tanganas, the Mandavas, the Mudaras, the Antagiris, the Bahirigis and Yavanas. The Nilmata informs us that aboriginists of Kashmir were Nagas or Naga tribe. By the name Naga is meant dieties which are supposed to reside in the springs and lakes of the valley. From early times, according to some accounts, Pisacas inhabited Kashmir but who they were is not known. The Darvas are mentioned by the Mahabharata and the Purnas as a Northern Tribe alongwith Daradas, the Suras, the Andumbaras the Kashmiris and the Trigartas. According to M.A Stein, the Abhisaras inhabited between the river Jhelum and Chandrabhaga and they included the provinces of Jammu and Poonch with Kashmir. The Gandharas occupied Peshawar and Rawalpindi in the north-west Punjab. They had close relations with the valley. The Sakas were driven off from the countries on the Oxus by Yenhchi. Proceeded to south and occupied Kipin (Kafiristan). Tarn suggests that this tribe occupied and ruled southern part of Kashmir for some time. A mountainous tribe Khasas, as mentioned by Stein, occupied the valley lying immediately to the south and west of Pirpanchal range between the middle course of the Jhelum and Kastavata or Kishtavar in the east. Tanganas lived in the neighbourhood of Kashmir because they occupied most parts of central Asia. Mandavas are mentioned as the tribe living in north-western areas of Kashmir. Madras lived near Kashmir in Sialkot as a corporation of Warriors and enjoyed the title of Rajas. It is provided in the Nilmata that Antagiris and Bahirigis were hilly tribes inhabiting the Himalayan ranges known as the great central Himalaya. The Yavanas, who settled in Kashmir, are considered as most esteemed of the foreign people who are identified with Ionians.

Lastly, mention may be made of the contemporary scholars who have exhausted much of energy in proving that Kashmiri in their racial stock are Jewish in essentiality. One is apt to refer to Dr. Nazir Ahmad Lahori's work "Jesus in Heaven on Earth", Dr. Aziz Ahmad Kashmiri "Asrari-Kashmir" and Dr. Yasin's work "Mysteries of Kashmir" and some works of Aziz Kashmiri of Roshni publications Srinagar. All of them assert that Kashmiris belong to Jewish racial stock. Their theory is neither properly authenticated nor is liable to be rejected in a huff. There is a grain of truth in theory. Keith as referred to by Dr. Aziz Ahmad Qureshi, believes that the masculine features of Kashmiris attributes to them acts of piety, though they were of Turaiska race. These kings lived hundred and fifty years after the great Budha had obtained Nirvana. Biologically, how much ethnic resemblance Kashmiris might have with them may not be assessed but the fact remains that many of them had settled in Kashmir. The tribe or the tribes of Yue-chi had entered Kashmir and even after the fall of the main dynasty had continued to live in the valley.

The infiltration conducted by Hunas, as recorded by Kalhana, is next to Indo-Scythians. Mihirakula's rule over Kashmir is testified to by Hieun-Tsang as well as by others. Their influence, therefore, cannot be ruled out. Huns and other people from central Asian tribes also migrated and settled in the valley. A group of sculptures from the ancient site of Harwan testify the admixture of the central Asian tribes with characteristic racial features, who settled in Kashmir in the fourth century AD or a little later date.

One of the tribes from North-West, who settled in Kashmir, was perhaps gurjars, and who belonged to Huna stock. Whether gurjars were related to Huna or not is debatable but it is not treated a single identifiable race. However, according to S.C Ray, in the present population of the valley, the gurjars, the Rajputs and the Jats, all hailing from Gurjara stock predominate. Some believe that gurjara emigration into Kashmir might have taken place from North Punjab, presumably during Karkota period.

Tibet is believed to be yet another surrounding area to Kashmir, wherefrom migration into the valley took place. Kalhana writes:

"Some excuse the cruelty of this lion among men by (referring to) a tenacious popular tradition which maintains: After killing the inhabitants of Aryadesa he performed a terrible penance, and reestablished pious observances in this land which overrun by impure Dardas, into the valley

through Afghanistan. The Aryan influence, therefore, provides us the clue to the racial affinities of the Kashmiri speaking people with people in Afghanistan.

The people of all these races, however, entered into the valley and settled here at various times. As a consequence, the present Kashmiri may be construed to be the admixture of all these races. It is, however, unfortunate that no serious biological study regarding the people has so far been conducted. There is no evidence in the annals of our history that any systematic physical extension has ever been done to prove any of the theory we hold to be true regarding racial stock of the people inhabiting the valley. The utmost we find in such research is that Kashmiri's possess brown skin and medium to tall stature. That Kashmiris are believed to be dolichocephalic—well developed forehead, a narrow face, and usually a chiseled leptorrhine nose is not enough to prove their racial stock. There are historians, who believe that Indo-Afghan or Nordics who entered into Kashmir from Gilgit and Chitral are identical with the ancestors of the Dard speaking tribes and the Pisacas of the Sanskrit literature. In the same breath it is also asserted that the racial characteristics of these Indo-Afghans from Afghanistan down to the Punjab are identical. They claim that the racial purity retained by the people of the valley is due to the hill locked character of Kashmir. However, nobody has presented any biological study to identify the similarity between these races and the Kashmiris.

If the theory that Kashmiris racially belong to the Indo-Afghan or Nordics is accepted then the fact that Kashmiris are Jewish is also to be accepted. This assumption is adopted on the plea that Afghans are Jewish in their racial stock. It is proved in a publication titled "Taz-Keera" authored by one Roshan Khan. Published by educational Press, Pakistan Chowk, Karachi, the book proves that Pathans are Jewish by race. According to Roshan's thesis Pathans, are not Aryan's, they are Jewish. Roshan Khan in the book describes the events from the days of Abraham, the prophet and through the ages, connecting the Pathans with the Jewish race. The author does not only seek the help of maps and present geographic and historical evidence to prove his thesis but also argues his case on the basis of the cultural heritage of the Pathans and their religious convictions. The study is based on the same assumptions of Ahmedyas that the lost tribe of Bani-Israel travelled along the Afghanistan route right into the Kashmir valley. These studies might be considered a scientific study of history but it does

not racially identify the people of Kashmir with Indo-Afghans or both of the peoples with the Jewish race. Thus it may be concluded that the Kashmiris are racially Jewish in so far as some Jews entered Kashmir through Afghanistan and settled in the valley like many other tribes, these Jews also absorbed in the population of Kashmir.

Let us, therefore, be content with the fact that Kashmiris racially do not belong to a homogenous race, but is an admixture of many races discussed above.

AHARBAL FALL: A FALL OF LIFE

Kasyapa, the first colonizer of Kashmir, requested the goddesses Uma, Lakshmi, Aditi, Saci and Diti to purify Kashmira. The goddesses, therefore, assumed the form of rivers because in Rigveda, the rivers are regarded as deities and are spoken of as purifying the worshipper physically as well as spiritually. Lakshmi took the form of a river called Visoka. Nilmata therefore, describes it as an incarnation of Lakshmi. The present river Veshau, whose waters are seen suddenly gushing out from the foot of the last and lofty pitch forming the dam on the western end of Kaunsar nag, is this old Visoka. Its waters find an exit not over but through the rocky barrier—it is a hole and this is called in Nilmata. "Akhorbila" or mouse hole. The Nilmat, writes M.A Stein related a leg and which identifies the Visoka with Lakshmi and accounts for its name "free from pain." Those who take bath in it are relieved of physical pain. In the beginning, the stream moves in northern direction and near Kungavattan contacts or absorbs itself with another stream. Then it turns towards Budil pass and reaches Aherabal. Turning to the north it joins the "remb-ara" at the village of "Nauvan—passing through many villages ultimately loses its existence into the Jhelum or veith around Sangam."

Below Kungavattan, between two lofty mountains nearly five km down, gushes out the Aherabal fall which is presently no mouse hole but gradually at the fall of its life. Sometimes in the history of Kashmir Aherabal is known and written as Arabul or Huri Bul—Ara being taken as the torrent by Vigne and Huri Bul signifying the place of Huri of Vishnu. According to Vigne Veshau has worn itself a deep and picturesque channel in the bare rock and with a grandeur befitting the head-waters of the "fabulous Hydaspes" or its still more ancient, sacred and modern appellation of Veshau, the river of Vishnu. According to Vigne the Aherabal fall did not

exceed twenty five feet in height at the time of his visit in 1835.

The Aherabal fall by itself is not a symbol of beauty—but vigne attributes its beauty to dark, deep and precipitous sides as the thick pine forests that surround it. It is true even today in its isolation the fall has nothing to attract but its surroundings are a source of bliss for visitors. The Pir Panchal, rising majestically behind the fall and releasing the cleanest water from its snows, makes the fall and the river Veshau an area of legends. Aherabal, in the past had sanctity for Hindus. Today it is a health resort for all the people whether insiders or outsiders of the valley. Presently very few people visit it attaching a sacred sentiment to the place. Vigne writes, "Arabul is a piece of peculiar sanctity with the Hindus and as such is frequently visited by them, though, perhaps, less now than formerly before the prosperity of the valley was on the wane, and the precipice over hanging its flood has been upon several occasions the last resting place for the feet of the Hindu suicide". In the contemporary period, Hindu suicide is not witnessed but like early times, accidental deaths are caused by the nallah when it is in spate. During floods, many deaths are caused in the Veshau Nallah both Gujars and Kashmiris are its victims. Many times cattle are the target. Nearly, two decades earlier, the department of Urdu the University of Kashmir, lost two lives in the torrents of the Nallah. A young Muslim girl, slipped into the waters of Veshau, on the back of the Aherabal Fall and when a young pandit boy tried to save her, both lost their lives in the waters. Alas our old tradition of 'Loll' amongst people of Kashmir is also on its wane. When I visited last, the souls of these youth hovered over my PWD hut—I heard the noise of these young souls, reminding a teacher to understand the fall of life. Alas much water in the Veshau has floated since then when a teacher and a taught, since these young souls lost their lives. Curse is on the educational bureaucrats, who have eroded the sacred relation of a teacher and a taught. Much to the discredit of state politics (politics is treated evil by the people in the State) and the bureaucrat) no voices were heard by me of the working people, who lost their lives in the waters of the Nallah Veshau. The working people, who lost their lives in the Nallah, die unheard and unwept. Nature maintains its balance in life and death but the sentiment of the lover remains the same.

If man destroys nature, nature destroys man is an old science postulate. There is also a tendency in nature to destroy her ownself. The Nallah Veshau destroys nature many a time in its history and presently the fall on

the Nallah seems to die its own death. The fall of Aherabal is dying on account of its erosion. In 1935, when Vigne visited, its height stood at 25 feet and today it is hardly 18 feet.... Who destroys whom is observable? Lakshmi in the form of Nalla Veshau, destined to purify Kashmir, is not in the process of its destruction but is determined to destroy the fall of Aherabal. Alas, the fall of Aherabal is the fall of purification of the people of Kashmir.

On my recent visit I watched it from three dimensions. The scenario the fall demonstrated to me was devastating. Sitting on the side of the whirlpool which is immediate course of the fall, I saw three logs nearly 10 to 12 feet in length, smacked to and fro. Each in its ordinary pace was whirled into the whirlpool in a minute thrown out of the pool, rescined back from the rock but every time the struggle of the logs railed them to come out of the pool. when sometimes half and other time more than an hour these logs struggled out distancing hardly 20 feet in the Nallah, fell into the waters of the great Aherabal Fall -- their fall in the waters of the fall lost them their existence for some seconds. When I found them rising with the dust of water in the fall they heaved the sigh of life. The life of the logs in the waters was neither rebirth nor death-- it was a process of disintegration of life. The trees death in life of logs but the logs could not resist torrents as the trees could. The Nallah Veshau, the Aherabal Fall and the logs could not give the story of perfection of Kashmira but the contamination of the life of the valley.

When I stood on the second dimension of it, I found myself, on the artificial bankment near the fall and when I looked back I found an inscription on the wall:

"Inaugurated by the Chief Minister of J&K Syed Mir Qasim."

On the front of it I gazed on the fall, I gazed constantly and when you gaze, you find the soul in a self, it was essence of the fall—it was communal, impure, insecure, vicious, wicked, corrupt, graceless and so on but its great quality was in its tumult. Tumult of a fall, found in the waters of the nallah Veshau, revolting because it had failed to purify Kashmira. Why did Lakshmi fail in purifying the people of kashmira is a matter of interrogation? Did it turn meelech?

On the third dimension I stood on the balcony of the PWD hut at Aharabal which brings a visitor closer to the fall, though from a distance. The engineer had designed the hut very well but unfortunately he did not

observe Lakshmi in the Veshau and the fall, otherwise it would have been an ideal building. Concentration on the fall from the hut reveals the soul of Lakshmi. The soul is born of the sea and is experienced from balcony of the PWD hut, the soul, the purifier of the world. Accordingly the scenario is the place of auspicious abode for worshippers not of Hindu alone but the Musalman who offers Nimaz on the rock—he seems to worship Al-lah in abundance around. As all the goddesses are the forms of Lakshmi, in Hindu culture, so is the totality of the environs of the Aharbal Fall a combination of all such form—it is Lakshmi incarnate. The Sukha suptika is the festival of Hindus which is celebrated by worshipping Lakshmi in the evening. During day they fast and in the evening they place lamp-trees in Temples, road-crossings, grounds, rivers, hills, houses and shops. They dine with friends, relatives and wear new clothes. They listen to musical concerts and decorate bed rooms with lights, perfumes, clothes and jewels. They honour on this day their friends and Brahmins. They pass the night with their beloved women. When I stood on the balcony, there was no festivity nor was a Hindu—I had revolted that heritage long back. And I could discern that I was amongst friends, the friends who did not find the spirit of Lakshmi in the fall. They have all broken from the past. Kashmiris in general as Muslims in particular have broken from their past. It is this sentiment of loss that I am in search of my heritage.

Whether, the spirit of Lakshmi, in Aharbal Fall is discernible presently or not the fact remains that it is a source of spiritual ecstasy—to a non believer of Hindu mythology, like me, it is a Wordsworthian reality of nature. To a believer of Hindu mythology, unlike me, it is incarnation of Lakshmi. These two types of people come to visit the Aharbal Fall. However, the majority of the people namely the commons do neither observe Aharbal as incarnation of Lakshmi nor as the Wordsworthian reality of nature but a source of income, whether in the meadows around Veshau or the jungles or the like. The common man in it finds a source of income that too which hardly sustains him. He neither enjoys it nor has he time to enjoy because he is in chains of ignorance and poverty.

Fall is at its wane, not only as a fall in physical sense but also in a spiritual sense. It is waning because nature through floods is eroding it and our engineering bureaucrat is not efficient to preserve it. Secondly, the Veshau and the fall are spiritually declining because very few Hindus find the soul of the Lakshmi in it. The Hindus are as much Hindus as Muslims

are Musalmans—both have lost what they had inherited. They have lost their commitment to 'Loll' and as such the Aharbal Fall is in its fall and the life in Kashmir is in its decay.

THE DEATH OF BANDIPORE APPLE ORCHARD

Manna, today accompanied by his friend, entered an apple orchard only to relax for an hour or so. Till then he had heard of villages, towns and cities in flames and fields ravaged. He had witnessed young, old driven out in troops. He was, tormented, racked and doubted. His loyalty was questioned and he was suspected sometimes as infidel and other time faithful. He was subjected to terror, violence, administrative tyranny and so on. He was like every Kashmiri in the aftermath of uncertainty, under stress and strains. He was a psychological wreck. Alienation from political and social life was thus natural.

Manna's friend, equally under stress and strain, suggested visiting nearby apple orchard, a property of the failed state. The friends knowing well, particularly the one as agricultural scientist, that an apple tree or any other fruit tree is as spiritual as men are in their spiritual linkage.

The fruit tree is celestial both as myth and reality. In Biblical sense it was the heavenly fruit that was propitiating and the disobedience to the command of God landed the man on earth. In Greek mythology a man and a woman known Philemon and Baucis, were transformed into the oak and linden tree, as reward for their virtuous life and they grew from a single trunk. They were incarnate virtue and their hospitality was distinguished amongst his fellow men. Jupiter and Mercury were pleased with the old couple for it. That is why for long time in the hilly country of Phrygia these two trees, wondrous and beautiful, were considered divine. The people far and near pointed them out as a great marvel, for such trees had never been seen anywhere on the earth. The tree was called 'Love Tree' and the couple deserved the epithet. A tree, whether in the Holy Book Quran, or in the Bible, is sacred. In Greek and Kashmir mythology a fruit tree is symbolic of divinity.

Kashmiri apple, Ambri or Delicious is not only juicy but holy. Hindus in Bihar, offer the apple before gods, for attaining the pleasure of gods or deities. It is like nectar and ambrosia of heavenly people. Alas! Kashmir has turned to be a slaughter house for fruit trees.

Manna and the friend had thought that an hour's blithe and sight seeing in a corner of an orchard would provide them heavenly peace and bliss. They had imagined like Wordsworth, the poet of nature that the tree that too apple might grant them:

Long have I loved what I behold,
The night that calms, the day that cheers,
The common growth of mother earth.
Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,
Her humblest mirth and tears.

Unfortunately Manna and his friend had to experience, not mirth but only torment and tears on their entry into the orchard. The orchard they visited for an hour's consolation was a total deconstruction. The bulldozer was in full swing—the trees were uprooted and lying prostrate on the ground. They were groaning on account of pain before final death. Hundreds and thousands of trees were struggling between life and death. There were none to perform the funeral rites which are important to all humanity including Greeks. Greeks placed a coin in the dead person's mouth to pay the ferrymen to ferry the dead soul over the river Styx to the underworld. There was none to perform the rite to place a coin in the mouth of the dead tree like Greeks, and none to pour a drop of water in the mouth in accordance with Kashmir tradition. There was hardly anybody to keep the dying trees under the shade. Some of them were crushed under the heavy weight of the bulldozer. The trees did not belong to saintly status being young and had not reached perfection, thereby absolute freedom was not possible. They could not, therefore find their way across the swirling current of Samsara (the eternal cycle of life and death).

These young apple trees had not achieved the 'mokesh' and so they wanted instantaneous death. Alas! For them death was the worst evil, because when they wished to die after having uprooted, they could not. Nobody was there to redeem their pain and agony of death. Thus, all the young and few old trees, were left unburied or without a coin in their

mouth and were forever stranded on the side of the river Styx. The scene in this orchard and the one on the other side of the stream, (dividing the two orchards) was so horrible that haunted Manna and his friend. Some were caused to be drowned in the stream. The whole orchard witnessed only uneasy ghosts. Manna thought when the secretariat is erected and the Razas enter into it, ghosts shall haunt them.

Manna and his friend were pained by the noisy scenes around. They heard only noisy voices, shrilling, creaking and they witnessed entire nearby orchard in (other side of the dividing stream) mourning mood. All of them wailing and beating their breasts for their brethren. They raised their hands towards the sky to pray before God so that He grants mercy to their brothers. They were bending their heads on the ground to mourn and pray like the ladies of Oedipus King in Greek mythology, when the king blinded himself for the sins he had committed. These mourning trees had not committed any sins but the Ahed Razas, who had committed sins, were off the scene. They were conscious of gravity of the Ahed Raza's sins but had failed to register their grievances to them because they had no patience to hear them. Assuredly, one of the talking trees commended that man in power is blind to the man in the street, the field and the man in the remote areas. Law is not meant for them but for the poor and the deprived one. They are unscrupulous decision makers.

Manna and his friend stood askance. They had no reason to explore, who the devil had destroyed the young apple orchard and who was responsible for the massacre of the habitat. Man in power is not only cruel to man in the street and the field but even to plants and animals. It is this tyranny against what Sheikh Noor-ud-din Wali (RA) laid restraint by saying:

Ann poshi Tale yale Wan Poshi.

(Sustenance is subject to the presence of bountied forests).

Alas! Callousness of representatives drunk in power can violate their own law, when it suits their vested interest. Anybody, who destroyed an apple orchard, is subject to years of imprisonment and yet those in power can disobey law and also escape punishment. Rulers in Kashmir, for the last four decades have lost their moral sense. They can, in pursuance of their interest go to any extent of betraying people.

Manna and his friend were sunk in two chairs in the standing or-

chard. They were pained to hear the woes and cries of the trees. They mourned for those who were dead saying that they died unsung and unwept. The fellow trees were crying in pain and agony on account of the process of bull-doing by the authorities. All the living trees were facing the disaster like that of house of Candmus amongst Greeks. Manna and his friend in noisy scene of agony and tragedy of the uprooted trees, sat in the chairs but with their souls shattered. Their souls ached and cried. They observed by chance a tree brooding and weeping but not sleeping. Before approaching and asking it a question, Manna thought that the tree could not talk like the talking tree experienced by Alexander the great. That talking tree was an illumination from the 'The book of Kings' an epic poem by Firdousi (AD 941-1020). According to the legend, Alexander came across this tree as he searched for the 'Fount Life' only to secure nectar. Manna and his friend were not in search of 'Fount Life' but persons turned out of the heaven on earth, because they are ruled and governed by Ahed Razas. So he has no zest for life. However, he dared to ask the talking tree the question, without expecting that it could talk, "How did the massacre occur? Had not the disaster management come to their help?" The tree promptly replied to the query and related the story:

"Sir, four persons, in your language as gentlemen and in our language Ahed Razas appeared in the orchard. They talked to each other in their own language of power and I overheard. They discussed pros and cons of the situation to select the site for district secretariat at Bandipore and found so called feasibility and adopted the place for construction. They decided to raise my brethren and the land to the ground. They thought that the felling of the trees is unfelt by humans. Devoid of human heart, but drunk in power, they bull-dozed each apple tree and the whole orchard. The decision makers included Muzza raza, Ussa Raza, Musha Raza and one chief Raza known as Phong Raza.

After hearing the tree Manna said to his friend "I do not possess any ill will against any Raza but I wonder about the Chief Raza because he is known for Buddhist faith. He is Bodhisattva, meaning that a man puts off his final liberation to work tirelessly for the sake of all living beings. What a modern tragedy that such a person became cause of killing living trees both young and old. Does he not understand the laws of Buddha? Even penance shall not relieve him of killing living beings—whether tree or human being. I am sure the phantoms of the trees shall always haunt the

decision makers".

The talking tree started cursing all the Razas in presence of Manna and his friend. Its prayers were pathetically presented and before the tree could stop talking, Manna and his friend, took leave of the talking tree and advanced to run away from the site. Leaving the gate the friend of Manna said to him, "Manna, do not be painful, it is a matter to be left to the law of retribution" and they left singing Wordsworth:

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
 The earth, and every common sight,
 To me did seem
 Appareled in celestial light,
 The glory and the freshness of a dream.
 It is not now as it hath been of yore; —
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,
 By night or day,
 The things which I have seen
 I now can see no more.

KASHMIR WITH OR WITHOUT SNOW

While writing the Magnum opus on Kashmir, Lawrence in the book "the valley of Kashmir", comments on the climate of the valley as well. He writes that the old men of the valley during that time declared that climate was changing and they were very positive that there were then no such winters as they had remembered as boys. They recalled that in Maharaja Gulab Singh's time the snow fell up to a man's shoulders, in Maharaja Ranbir Singh's time up to knees. The people had according to Lawrence come to the belief that climate was changing and they all thought that natural water resources had fallen. They pointed to the villages where rice could not then grow on account of paucity of water and to old canals which had then turned dry. They also maintained rightly that the mountain springs were decreasing and that the climate of Kashmir was becoming milder and more like that of the Punjab.

During last nearly a decade, there appeared such changes in the climate of the valley that the people thought in the same manner as Lawrence, talked about during his stay in Kashmir. The people had come to realize that Kashmir was changing in climate and going Punjab way. The experience of the people was the same as those of the people living more than a century back. Further, the belief in modern world that the temperature of the world is changing strengthened the belief that Kashmir climate is reversing. Until certainly all believed that Kashmir is going to be placed in hot rather than temperate zone. Before we accept the theory of climatic change, let us discuss the history of snow or winter in Kashmir from ancient times.

The ancient Kashmir was named as land of Parvati, after the consort of Lord Shiva and as such it was used as the best place for worship and communication with God. Hindus, during the period, had many or one

should say innumerable, places in Kashmir where they offered oblations and penance. One would easily contend that snow culture had an impact on their religion. Talking about the worship performed in the valley Kalhana Pandit writes:

And the most delightful Kashmir summer, which is not to be found (elsewhere) in the whole world, was used to good purpose over the worship of Lingams formed of snow in the regions above the forests.

In the legends of Kashmir, when the traditional customs were broken in the land, the Nagas, who had lost their accustomed obligations, sent down excessive snow, and thus destroyed the people. Consequential upon it, deep snow used to fall every year to cause distress to the Saudhus, the King resided for six months in the cold seasons in the neighbouring regions. In the footnote of *Rajtarangni* by Kalhana, M.A Stein observes that it is clear that the hill State of Rajouri was included in areas amongst neighbouring regions. Possibly, the present Darbar move of the Secretariat is the legacy of the same tradition of Kings, who shifted in cold seasons to the neighbouring regions. However, at that time these manifested itself some miraculous power, through which Brahmans, who offered oblations and sacrifices, escaped the destruction, while the Baudhas perished. A Brahman named Chandradeva, who was a descendant from Kashyap practiced austerities to please Nila, the lord of the Kashmir Nagas and protector of the land. Nila having manifested himself to him removed the affliction of excessive snowfalls. However, legend or no legend, it is history of Kashmir that reveals many a time destruction to the life and property of the people on account of excessive snowfalls or sometimes ruination of the valley due to drought. Perhaps, it is in this spirit that A.A Azad having a deep sense of history of Kashmir had to complain:

(Kashmiri) melt in response to heat of summer,

Freeze by inches in response to cold winter,

Cannot breath or speak to anybody

They have none of the friends or sympathizers.

Kalhana describes the affliction of the people wrought by the excessive snowfalls, while talking about the flight of Bhoja. Bhoja afraid of being sold by the Damaras to the King's envoy Almakara resolved the escape from Sirahsilakotta. He wanted to move to Dard territory along the banks

of Kishenganga. He took the route by the bank of Madhumati the nallah that falls on the northern side of the town, Bandipore and through the gorges from Athwato and Chaandaji; he could cross the Dard valley. While Bhoja tried to escape, Kalhana describes full well the onslaughts of the snowfall, whether from his own adventure or the adventure of Bhoja. In its description Kalhana asserts that Bhoja experienced that Kashmir was in many places full of sharp edges of the frozen stones that hit like the points on the fangs of death. At other places the clouds hid the day light and produced darkness as if they were the snares of the death god. Somewhere the falling avalanches resembled by their masses a herd of elephants. Bhoja's body was hit by the hissing spray of the torrents as if by arrows at many places. In some places his skin burst open under the piercing wind, and again the dazzling reflection of the glittering snow used to destroy his vision. At a wide open he expected a deep fall and a clear way at a narrow one. Often times, he would think he was ascending even when gliding down. After experiencing six or seven day's adventure by facing the trying snowy season, he reached a village on the frontier of the Dard territory.

However, snow whenever in wrath is itself a messenger of death for the people of Kashmir. Kalhan Pandit says that snowfall unexpectedly destroyed crops in the month of Bhadrapada, when the fields in the land were covered with the autumnal rice crop which was then near riping. It caused a great loss to the people and finally famine broke out killing humans in the valley. Yet at another place Kalhana resembled the whiteness of snow with the grim laughter of death bent at the destruction of all beings in Kashmir. According to him rice crops sank and perished together with the people's hope for existence.

The snow culture in the valley has had many facets during the last thousands of years. It had not only influenced our religion but even politics, language and Kashmiri literature. Kalhana provides many phrases that directly indicate such phrases. For example, "selling snow on the snow mountain" meaning thereby to attend to a useless job or trade or profession. "Sheena Mohnu" or snow-man again calls for an imaginary being without having any substance or essence. Similar to it is "Snow King" which qualifies a king who enjoys no powers. While the attendants of a King were taking pains in his service, Kalhan thought that they would soon get profit and not sell snow on a snowy mountain. At another place, writes Kalhana, that Damaras, who thought that the new king would keep the throne from

their own lord only till the snow had melted. Accordingly the king was nicknamed Himaraja (the snow king). The phrase "Krohin Sheen" or black snow, qualifies an impossible thing. A thing unusual or unthinkable or impossible is comparable to black snow. The whiteness of snow has universality.

Whatever the hazards of excessive snowfalls in the valley, to think of Kashmir without snow is unimaginable. Kashmir history is the history of snowfalls and without snow Kashmir turns a desert. Snowfalls are also advantageous to the survival of Kashmiri people. Snow is the source of Lingams and water in rivers, canals, springs, and the like. Agriculture is subservient to snow. It is beauty and worth of Kashmir and its people. Its importance makes the people believe that absence of snow is bad omen or portent. The people of Kashmir have developed the belief that drought means that they are under curse. During last decade, drought, militancy, oppression and fear were construed to mean that they are under curse. Thus the heavy snowfall in January, 2002 is expected to be a good omen. The people now generally feel that the curse which was faced by the people during last decade is under a decay. They rejoiced the fall of snow in the recent weeks.

During medieval and modern periods of snow history in Kashmir the excessive wrath of snow of Nagas is unknown but absence of snow is detestable. Snow has continued to be charm of Kashmir and Kashmir has enjoyed its distinctive personality on account of it. In the medieval and modern periods, Kashmir as a temperate zone, has witnessed snow in its prime, though some years of drought have also been experienced. Some historians here believed that though Kashmir is 5000 ft above sea level, it is neither very cold nor very hot. We find G.M.D Sufi referring in "Kashir" to the concept:

Heat there is, but hot T^r is not;

Cold there is, but cold T^r is not.

According to G.M.D Sufi, the reason for it is the surrounding high hills, which save the valley from the cold blasts of the north and scorching winds from the south. Sufi admits that two months of January and February, better to say now, December, January and February, however, even on lower parts of the valley are seldom free from snow. The modern history of snow in Kashmir varies. It is neither heavy snow as in ancient Kashmir, nor

as much scanty as in the medieval times. During the time of Lawrence, the people of Kashmir also believed that Kashmir was getting dry at least in terms of changing weather. Even in contemporary period of the history of snow, the people of Kashmir just before the fall of snow in January 2002 felt the same way of declaring Kashmir going the Punjab way.

Hassan Khuihami, the contemporary historian, has aptly recorded and described the winter season in Kashmir. He is giving the same experiences as this author had in his life time. He calls winter as 'Vande-Kal' and includes in it Poh, Magh and Phagun months of Kashmir calendar (21st December to ending February of next year). He admits that during these months humidity increases affecting the closure of pores of the human body. Senses loose that balance and sexuality is on increase and consequently, people take resort to remain indoors or in Hamaams. The snow continues to fall during middle of December of each year to the middle of February next year. Sometimes it is more than six ft snow in Srinagar. The waters of Dal Lake and that of rivers and canals get frozen. The frozen water demonstrates strange morphological changes. The temperature is usually below zero. During the time of Hassan Khuihame most of the houses were thatch roofed. Accordingly, during winter, long icicles used to hang on the edges on the roofs of the houses. Sometimes, Hassan writes, winter is so severely freezing everything that the atmosphere turns to be suffocating. In Kashmiri such severe cold winter is known as "Kath-Kosh" or frozen season. During this period the sun shines, rains are absent but everything weakens due to frozen earth and frozen atmosphere. It sucks the juice from trees and their branches, says Hassan, and the cold is piercing and trees seem dead and dry. Even the eggs and oil get frozen and people walk over the Dal Lake and the Wullar along with their bag and baggage. During late fifty's and early sixty's, I am myself witness to the Dal freezing to the point that a jeep crossed over it. According to Hassan, great "Kath-Kosh" or severe cold when the Dal Lake, the Wullar Lake and river Jhelum got frozen has been recorded in AD, 1652-1764, 1781, 1816, 1833 and 1879. Hassan believes that severity of cold is tolerable for the people because they are accustomed to it.

In recent years, the people in drought hit Kashmir thought that the land is turning the way of Punjab. However, snowfalls in January 2002, have rekindled the hope that Kashmir and the snow go together. The wedding of Kashmir and the snow has started with the advent of Satisar and

shall continue till eternity excepting some years of drought from time to time which fit in the laws of nature. Thus, the snowfalls in January, 2002 are good omens for the future peace, harmony and economic prosperity of the people in the valley. Kashmir without snow loses its charm and beauty, snow culture may die down but Kashmir with snow shall persist.

BATHROOM CULTURE IN KASHMIR

The people of Kashmir are believed to be lovers of spiritual life—less now more in the past. Kalhan accordingly and rightly observes that Kashmiris belong to a country which may be conquered by the force of spiritual merits and not by forces of soldiers. Kalhan thinks that the inhabitants of Kashmir are afraid only of the world beyond. Whenever somebody is afraid of the world beyond, he seeks spiritual development through piety and devotion to Allah. The pre-requisite of spiritual development of an individual or that of group or any cultural unit is the physical purification. Sheikh Hamza Mukhdoom (RA) a great saint of Kashmir, therefore, was right in conjecturing that daily bathing is guarantee for longevity of life and spiritual development. The people of the valley, since the days of Kashyapa adopted definite methods of physical purification. These methods included bath and washing of face, concealed organs and exposed organs of the body before going to the communion between man and God. Water is the sacred gift of God and to all a source of physical purification. Physical purification leads to spiritual development and later is the source of betterment to the life in the world beyond. Bathing cells, therefore, are the places where purification of the body is guaranteed. The isolated geographical personality of Kashmir by itself attracts most of the people, within or without, for a source of spiritual inspiration. A geographical or physical personality manifests itself into its religious personality which is usually as distinct as that of the former. Kashmir is no exception to the rule because religious personality is caused by the environment—the environment that suits to the temper of religion. Physical purification leading to spiritual attainments is therefore, the exclusive right of the people of Kashmir. Kashmir boasts herself to be as a place of worship and oblations for the people whether insiders or outsiders because it abounds in cold and clean water.

The pursuit of spiritual values by the people in the valley, therefore led to the bathroom culture. It has, accordingly, established a long history of its own.

Bathing cells or bathrooms were named in ancient Kashmir as 'Srankostha' in Sanskrit. 'S ran-kuth', presently is in common use and is derived from the same Sanskrit name. According to MA Stein the Sanskrit name was adapted to 'S 'ran-kuth long before Kalhan. It was also prevalent during the time of Kalhan. When MA Stein visited the valley before 1892, he found the name 'S ran-kuth' in vogue. Thus, 'Sranakostha' stood for the designation of the bathing-huts on the rivers and springs in Kashmir, which later was Kashmiranized as "S 'ran-kuth".

It should not be out of place to mention that the 'Sranakostha' of Kashmir are mentioned even by Ksemendra as 'Samayam'. Kalhan in his introduction to Rajtarangni records that in Kashmir the rivers were free from dangers and aquatic monsters and were provided with warm bathhouses for the winter and furnished with comfortable embankments (for descending) into the water. The chronicle further registers that bathrooms were not the privilege of the rich in the ancient time or the poor were deprived of it. Possibly till then neither the Kings had the sources to erect public bathrooms nor did the concepts of public bathrooms had any currency. Explaining the distress of the common man during the time of the King Partha (906-921 AD), Kalhan writes that Pangu praised his own comfort, looking from inside his hot bathroom, while he saw the people moving outside in distress and misery. From the ancient times to the recent past, Kashmir had the bathrooms spread all over. The bathrooms existed in all cities and villages from times immemorial. The bathrooms were and are erected on the wooden rafts on both sides of the river Vyath or Vitasta or Jhelum from earlier to the present times. Second type of bath-cells are usually erected on the springs or 'Nags', found anywhere in a village or near the village. These bath cells are erected on a part or the whole of the spring opening. In the ancient times as said earlier, hot bathrooms were the privilege of the King or his courtiers or the rich but soon after public hot or cold bathrooms were erected and remained in common use. With the currency of the concept of public bathrooms (hot) were erected mostly in urban areas particularly in Srinagar near the banks of the river Jhelum. The hot bathrooms were erected near the banks of the Vyath (Jhelum) in Srinagar on the ground of easy supply of water. In ancient Kashmir, the

bathrooms, whether hot or cold, were found attached to temples, viharas, shrines, thirthas and the like, for the convenience of the pilgrims. After the process of Islamization in Kashmir, the hot and cold bathrooms were attached to mosques and Dargahs (Shrines) to help self-purification. In offering prayers Muslims have to wash their physical organs five times during a day and they are expected to be constantly under self purification.

Bathroom culture in Kashmir has developed in a scientific progression. During the Muslim Rule in Kashmir, under the influence of Iranians and Islam the public Hamams were introduced in the valley. Consequently, Hamams and the hot bathroom could not be erected in isolation. Friday mosques in particular could not be erected without a Hamam and hot bathrooms attached to them. The erection of Hamams to mosques depends on the catchment area of the mosque and the resourcefulness of the people of the area. These bathrooms attached to Hamams in mosques act both as hot and cold bathing cells depending on seasons. It has its own technical knowhow to construct such bathrooms. The local mason is trained in erecting a Hamam and a bathroom in a mosque. The technique though simple yet needs a creative capability. A circular pot or a container made of copper designed in a particular manner is purchased of the size depending on the number of the people in the catchment area of the mosque and is installed on the hearth. The hearth is attached under the Hamams on the side—certain channels from the interior mouth of the hearth made of bricks under the stone rafts of the Hamam and to the container on the hearth. The container is filled with water, nowadays through a water tape, earlier through a rope pulley attached to a wooden pole and a bucket. Hearth is ignited and water is heated. The same water is provided to the people using the bathrooms attached to the Hamams. During summer the hearth is not ignited but the cold water available in abundance in Kashmir is supplied to the bathroom tanks invariably. During medieval times under the Iranian influence, bathrooms whether hot or cold were divided in 'Merdana' (Gents) and Zanana (Ladies) so that males and females could be isolated from each other. From "S 'ran-kuth", the name "Gusulkhana" was replaced because gentry under the influence of official language during the period could not be avoided. During the Muslim period, like any other social system, only gentry and elite could afford private bathrooms naming it "Gusul Khana".

Historically, public bathrooms had great significance in Kashmir. Ev-

ery social system in its history has many glorious decade or centuries. Kashmir cannot be exception. A great fire in Srinagar is recorded in the year 1123 AD. Kalhan describing the fire says that the river Vyath (Jhelum) lined on both banks with the houses in flames looked like the sword of death welted with blood on both edges. The people of Srinagar could not easily extinguish the fire till the whole city was razed to the ground. However, Kalhan records that multitudes of the wooden bathing huts and boat bridges were removed from fear of the fire. It caused even the water ways within the city, deserted and isolated. The importance of 'S' ran-kuth or bathing hut in Kashmir is thus proved by saving these constructions in a great fire as mentioned. Kalhan further gives testimony to this fact by referring to the Superintendent of Treasury, Almakara, who embellished land by constructing bathing huts (Sranakostha), Mathas, Erabrahhh bridges and the like. It shows that state officials had undertaken to spend money on such public needs and requirements which in modern jargon means health and religious performance Engineering.

The hot bathrooms play and played a great part in the winter life of Kashmirians of all classes. In urban areas hot bathrooms attached to mosques or shrines are available for the poor as well. The rich and most of the middle classes have no bathroom system available in their residential houses according to their economic standards.

In forties and fifties, the people of various classes erected bathrooms in their residential houses on account of process of isolation. The poor used clay pots (Big) near the hearth with hole in the back of the hearth, to heat water in the pot and the rich used copper pot near it. The hearth as such served two purposes—one to cook meals and the other heating of water in the pot erected near the back holes. The pot behind the hearth has a pipe attached, round which a bathroom is erected. The system is still in vogue. In higher classes or elite, the system is replaced by modern technology. However, clay pot is mostly replaced by copper one and in the valley most families now continue with the same type of bath-cells. It is strictly confined to the residential house of a family. No individual, in present context of material comfort, can afford to go without hot water during winter. In villages those of the poor classes who cannot afford to erect hot bathrooms in their houses, can ill afford to go without hot water. However, nature is helpful to them by providing them with springs which emit lukewarm water during winter for a bath. There are people, who even in se-

vere winter use cold water for bathing. To dip in very cold water in the Vyath is symbolic of spiritual ascendancy and ecstasy. Many old people belonging to different communities are observed taking baths in the river bath-cells, when the temperature is below zero. Kashmiri Pandits treat the river Vyath or Vitasta as a manifestation of Siva's consort Parvati. To dip in its water, therefore, is sacred to the Hindu community of Kashmir. Some times people are seen having dip in cold water after breaking the ice-crust of water. Bathroom huts are even now found every where on the banks of the river Vyath, springs and lakes. Bathrooms in the open are covered with wooden sheds. In recent years they are converted to concrete sheds. Explaining the role played by these bathrooms in our past Stein says, "They serve not only for the purpose of obulations, but also as comfortable dwelling rooms during the season of severe cold. The poorer people, as far as they are Mohamdans, resort to the public Hamams, which are attached to almost every large mosque of the country. In the city of Srinagar, these Hamams are found in particularly large numbers, close to the river bank, where they can be conveniently supplied with water. A similar custom seems to have existed in Kalhan's time. This explains why reference is made to these "warm bathrooms" in connection with the description of the rivers".

The embankments (Ghats) on the banks of the Vyath to this day for descending to reach near the bathrooms (S'ran-kuth') or water itself is lined with stones and are used by the people for bathing purposes. For women it is a place to wash clothes on a sunny day either on the Vyath bank or a spring opening or Lake Beach. Kalhan names these Ghats as 'Yarbal' (friends meeting place) and shows the great part these embankments used to play in the daily life of the people. He also thinks of the wooden bathing huts on the river regarding which he refers "repeatedly to Kashmirian delight in the cold water of their rivers". Kalhan praises Kashmir for its cold waters during summer. He says that nowhere do the inhabitants on a hot summer day find before their houses water like that of the Vyath, cooled by glaciers of snow over mountains. He also asserts that water of Kashmir has a property to digest the diet or meal used by the public because this water is curdled through rocks and whitened by snow. Alas that water in the Vyath has now undergone environmental pollution.

While the ancient Kashmir bathroom system was of private utility, it soon had become a public necessity. In its historical process it was converted as a culture both in content and essence. These bathrooms or cells

whether hot or cold played in Kashmir history a vital socio-political role. It was a gathering place for men and women. Though these bath-huts were compartmentalized in course of history in Mardana and Zanana yet all such places were thronged by the people with a view of gossip, prayers, leisure comforts and nature study. Males gathered to gossip on socio-economic-cum political problems of their people, whereas elder people went for prayers and abulations. Poets attended these places of bath premises with a view of nature study and 'Tykyas' (Gathering places of Sufi types Darvesh) were selected near a rivulet, Nallah or a river or nearer to an isolated bath-houses. Ladies thronged on the river ghats (during that time water pipe system was not available), near spring bath-huts and lake-ghats. They talked and gossiped. These places, with either washing clothes or fetching water for domestic purposes, were full of females and these ghats (embarkments) were known as 'Yarbal-Kakene' i.e. association of gathering of female friends. They made friendships talked their socio-economic problems. Exchanged their secrets and love tales and so on. These places were a kind of "Samanbals" i.e. meeting places for relaxation, gossip, deliberate on serious problems as well as exchange of secrets. It was a place where Nagray, Farhad, Majnoon, Yousuf, met Heemal, Sheerin, Laila, Zulaikha and others respectively. Sufis, saints, seers, Reshis and Molvis prayed and mediated at such places. Kashmir has by and large been misgoverned during most of its political history. Kashmiris have been helpless either before a strong or a weak King. He has been incapacitated by a corrupt leadership and bureaucracy. Misgovernment, corruption and injustice alienate people and for long years, socio-economic and political gossip, remained the domain of four walls of wooden huts or the premises of these bath-cells, even rumours, and anti social activities emanated from such cells.

There are humorous descriptions in Rajtarangni and other chronicles on Kashmir regarding these bathrooms. According to M.A Stein bathrooms in Kashmir capital (Srinagar) have at all times been hot bed of political gossip and fertile nursery of false and absurd rumours. Even character assassination both individual and collective emanated from these cells. According to MA Stein Kalhan, himself draws such pictures when he remarks that people gathered in small crowds near Ghats, bath cells and such other places to seek information from news fabricators. It was easy for the rumour mongers to convey the news to people who gathered near bathrooms. Bathrooms and bathing-cells, whether in winter or summer had, therefore, developed its own personality. It had developed a bathroom

culture.

Alas this bathroom culture as a natural process of historical progress vanished during last three decades in almost in all its forms whether in urban or rural areas. The simple reason of its abandonment lies in the invasion of that bathroom system which was imported to the valley from the western world. Any change in social, economic and political structure solves many problems but creates new ones as well. During last three to four decades, socio-economic change in Kashmir converted a Kashmiri to the position of family self-sufficiency and thereby social alienation. Modern bathroom is attached to a residential house and public bathroom is losing its importance. Even the bathroom attached to Hamams is used only during some particular time. Public bathroom is now losing currency. Today's bathroom system is a contrast to our old bathroom culture. It is concrete, it is flushing, and it is at the same time terribly inanimate. Wooden bathrooms on springs in villages are rapidly replaced by concrete ones. Today's bathroom is private—isolation acute that if a poor man ever hazards to use it he is treated uncivilized. There is no gossip and no female friends, no concept of "Yarbal-kak-e-ne" i.e. friends meeting place, in present special order. There is no "Samanbal" or meeting ground. There is a bathroom adjacent to toilet and there is no need to meet. One succeeds the other—it is one man's show. Tape supplies water in the house and no lady has to move with a pitcher on her head like a deer with her horns. Today's bathroom is not symbolic of spiritual ascendancy and ecstasy. Though in Kashmir, presently, people are pursuing material advancement, yet there are new who pursue spiritual advancement but all of them have gone in hiding. They are alienated from present bathroom system and do not find previous bathroom culture anywhere. Bathrooms are not hot bed of political gossip because gossip has tended to political hide-outs. Today's bathroom system is a technology not a culture. It has no value structure attached to it. It is soulless and lifeless.

At last bathroom culture we had inherited has vanished. It has subjected itself to the process of isolation. Public bathroom has lost its meaning. It is useless and outdated. It can never be redeemed.

Index

A

Akthar Mohiuddin 59
Amarnath 46, 118, 119, 121
Amritsar 70, 72, 73
Aryan 40

B

Bande Pather 48, 62
Bomwari poand 29
Brahmin 28, 39, 48, 62, 122
Bureaucracy 60, 86, 88, 89, 91, 92

C

China 11, 13, 19
Chunt Gand 5
Congress 74, 83

D

Dardic 141
Dastigir Sahib 66
Delhi Agreement 74, 78, 84
Dogra Rule 28, 126, 138
Dogras 34, 41

F

Folk Lores 61
Folk Tales 55, 58, 59

G

Ganderbal 47, 134
GMD Sufi 2, 87
Gujjar 61
Gulab Singh 67, 73

H

Hal (a plough) 102
Hazratbal Shrine 7, 123, 128

Hindu Rule 66, 87, 122

I

Isband Soz 6

J

Jamaat-e-Islami 104
Janata Party 79
Japan 3, 11
Jin 31
Jonaraja 4, 115, 122
Jumma Thool 29

K

Kalhana 2, 65, 123, 157, 165
Kamraj 87
Kangar 2, 3, 5, 7, 7-22
Karma 39
Kashmiri 8, 12, 16, 22, 31, 43-62
Kashmiri gown 4
Kolcha 20
Kundal 4, 7

L

Ladakhis 101
Ladi Shah 61, 62
Lu Yu 13

M

M.A Stein 2, 112, 166
Majooli 12
Malun 22
Maqbool Kralwari 32
Maraz 87
Marriage 6, 21, 26
Mata-mal 22
Molvi Anwar Shah Sahib Lolabi 32
Moti Lal Saqi 8, 61
Muktabs 29
Musalman 37, 40, 43

N

National Conference 42, 68,
75, 79, 83, 128
Natural Calamity 31
Nikah 50
Nuna-Chae 11, 12, 17
Nunda Reshi 66

P

Pakistan 11, 76, 79, 82, 128, 131, 143
Pandit 13, 28, 37, 40, 43
Peers 29, 33
Poshkar Bhan 59

Q

Quran 16, 33, 93, 150

R

Ranbirsinghpura 77
Rangresh 12
Ranjit Singh 67
Resettlement Bill 76, 79, 80, 82
Reshi 40, 66
Rinchin 66

S

Salar 6
Sanskrit 2, 64, 65, 66
Sarposh 6
Scythian 140
Sheikh Abdullah 74
Sheikh Yaqoob Sarfi 33

T

Treaty of Amritsar 70, 72
Tsara-Kangar 6

U

UGC 97, 99

W

Wa-ru 22

Wane Wun 62
Wular Lake 4

Z

Zajeer 6
Zeenader 6
Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto 104